

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

No. 98.—VOL. IV.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 25, 1865.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[MAXLEY AND THE COUNTESS.]

THE MAID OF MONA.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XV.

MAXLEY AND THE COUNTESS.

Her precious pearl in sorrow's cup,
Unmelted at the bottom lay,
To shine again, when, all drunk up,
The bitterness should pass away.

Moore.

The wild exultation of Maxley at the success of his pretensions with the Countess of Rathsmere, was too great to permit him immediately to think or act calmly.

"Years have only added to her loveliness," he ejaculated. "The sight of her thrills my whole being—maddens me as of yore—makes me her devotee and worshipper. Her husband has been long dead, and she is quite alone. She has one of the finest estates in England. I must renew my wooing, and make that wooing a triumph!"

He raved of bearing her to distant and unfrequented haunts—of imprisoning her in some old castle on the coast of Ireland or Scotland, and of keeping her in close captivity the remainder of her life, unless she should make satisfactory terms with him for her liberty.

But at length he became cooler, and the master of his emotions.

"All that can be done in due time," he mused; "but why not be cunning? Deceit's the thing—that quiet seeming which is more potent than the most blustering reality. Why give way to fury and bitterness? The game is all in my own hands. Why not obtain money from her ladyship to carry out my projects, and thus make her build the prison she is to inhabit?"

He chuckled at this new view of the case, and by degrees recovered his calmness.

Now that fate has placed her in my hands," he thought, "I must not be bashful. What ties draw me—love, admiration, revenge, bitterness, love of money, all the light and darkness of my being!"

He continued these dark musings.

Busy as were his thoughts, however, he gave due attention to the Jolly Herring, holding her to the course he had taken when leaving the Port, and running nearly in the direction of the north-western coast of Wales.

On, on she flew, the lights on the southern coast of Man rapidly lessening behind her, and the gloominess of the scene around her increasing every moment.

The breeze had freshened to such an extent, that she was borne down on her side by it, owing to her lightness. The waves were not large, but they were heavy and chopping, and at times their shocks caused the little craft to quiver to her keel. And the night's utter blackness, as made visible by the ghastly glare of the billows, and the screaming whistle of the winds, in connection with the wild motions of the sloop, now borne aloft on foaming crests, and now plunged into the black gulfs between them—all made up a spectacle of the most terrific nature.

"It's time to go about," finally muttered Maxley, after half an hour's sail, as his eyes caught the gleam of Castletown light beyond the rocks of Scarlet Point. "I must shelter myself behind the land, in order to have a good talk with her ladyship. She and I must resume our old acquaintance!"

He put the helm hard up, and the sloop's bow flew to the windward, her sail shivering and her bowsprit whipping the water, as she rose and plunged on the chopping billows. Immediately she wore around, falling off and taking the wind, the boom shifted with a jerk, and the breeze caught the sail with such violence as to bury the lee bulwarks in the sea; but she instantly stood up bravely to her work, and dashed away on her new course like a frightened bird.

The return of the little craft shorewards was as rapid as had been her flight seaward. Running boldly into Castletown Bay, Maxley passed the harbour light, and ran close to the land, at the head of the bay, in comparatively still water, where he hove to, dropping his anchor.

"The village is wrapped in sleep and darkness," he muttered, looking towards the light. "We're as much alone here as if we were buried. Not a soul is

stirring on the shore. The place and the hour for my communications to her ladyship could not be better!"

He proceeded to the little cabin.

"Here we are," he declared, with assumed hoarseness. "I am afraid your ladyship has been uncomfortable, in so small a cabin, owing to the roughness of the weather."

The countess replied that she had long been familiar with the sea, and that she had not experienced any sense of discomfort during her brief voyage.

"Still, the shelter of the land is agreeable," she added. "Have we reached the desired spot—the portion of the coast you mentioned?"

"Yes, your ladyship. We are there, at the head of Castletown Bay."

"Thanks, thanks!" said the countess, thrilling with her conflicting emotions, as she sprang to her feet. "Can it be possible that my poor child is living here? Let us hasten, Mr. Maxley, to seek her. I am all excitement and impatience. A mother's love, you know, long debarred from expression, must find utterance at such a prospect as is now before me. O, my child!—my lost darling! Let us take the boat and hasten to her!"

Her heart overflowed with maternal affection and longings, and she was too much occupied by them to immediately notice that Maxley, instead of moving or replying, had drawn himself up rigidly and defiantly, and was regarding her with a smile of wicked triumph that was sufficient to strike a chill to her heart.

"Why do you look at me in that way?" she demanded. "Are we not going ashore immediately?"

"That depends," he answered. "You can go, I suppose, if you wish to; but it has occurred to me that your ladyship will not care to go ashore, at such a time, on uncertainties!"

"On uncertainties?" she repeated.

"Or on a wild-goose chase, or on a Tom-fool's errand—whatever we may call it," he proceeded, resuming his natural voice. "The young lady might not be found, you know."

"Not found!" her ladyship echoed, in astonishment.

"In fact, the story that has brought you here was a pleasant little fiction of my invention. I have deceived you!"

"Deceived me!" faltered the countess, sinking back upon the seat from which she had arisen. "Is it possible that you can trifle with me on a subject of this nature? What do you mean?"

Maxley glanced at the tiny windows astern, assuring himself that no beam of light could stray through their carefully covered panes, and then he raised the lantern lighting the cabin, and held it very near to his face, saying:

"Be pleased to look at me, fair Countess of Rathmere. Perhaps you can find a clue to my conduct. You may recall when and where you have seen me before!"

The countess earnestly scrutinized his dark visage, thus thrown into full relief by the rays of the light. Despite the changes of years, the coarseness of his garb, the burlesque of his form, the lawless glances of his eyes, his unkempt hair and beard—all the features at variance with her recollections—a look of instant recognition passed over her face, and she recoiled from him with a wild cry, exclaiming:

"It's Markington!"

Maxley bowed, with an audible murmur of satisfaction, and helped himself to a seat.

"Markington, at your service," he said; "your old friend Markington, or Maxley—just as you choose to call him. After many years of separation, which I need not say has been very painful to me, we have the pleasure of meeting!"

The countess was appalled at her situation, coming so abruptly upon her freshly-awakened hopes, and Clarkson, set up a shrill scream of terror, taking refuge behind her mistress.

Maxley, shaking his fist at the maid, exclaimed: "If you utter another yell like that, I'll throw you overboard!"

Clarkson's manifestation of excitement and dread subsided into a frightened mummur, and she covered before the glance of Markington, who had for years been painted to her under all the colours requisite to make him an object of terror.

The countess struggled to regain her self-possession, and at length she said:

"You live then, as I was informed; and you live on this island!"

"As your ladyship sees." And his features relaxed in a grim smile.

"And at last we have met!"

"It seems so."

A long pause followed, during which the couple gazed with more or less steadiness at each other.

"I thank heaven that I have found you," finally murmured the countess, "let what will come of our meeting!"

"I share in your ladyship's thankfulness for this favour—I do indeed!"

"It was only by chance—or rather providence—that I received the hint that has brought me here," the countess continued. "A man who formerly knew you in England, and who, more recently, found you living here, came to know very lately of the feelings and suspicions with which you have so long been regarded by me. The rest you can imagine. Your conscience will readily inform you why I am now in your presence."

She fixed her clear eyes searchingly upon him.

"You are here to make certain inquiries, or to utter certain suspicions, I suppose," he carelessly responded. "Very good. I happen to be in the mood to receive you in a friendly fashion, and I beg leave to declare myself entirely at your service."

The countess remained silent a moment, pressing her hand to her heart, as if to still its wild throbbings; and then she said, in a voice rendered tremulous by her emotions:

"Permit me to say that I am not here to hunt you down, to demand your punishment, or even to reproach you for your past misconduct. I can forgive you freely if you will only undo your wrong doing, and make such restitution as is in your power. The years that have passed since I saw you must have brought to you stern and solemn lessons. I see by your garb and aspect that your lot has not been one of luxury and ease—on the contrary, one of hardship and obscurity, and perhaps of desolation. Perhaps you have been called upon, as I have been, to bury those you loved, those in whom you trusted, those from whom you derived the sunlight of your existence. If so, you will be able to look mercifully upon the bereaved soul that now appeals to you. You will be able to forget the passions of other days, all seeming causes of offence, all that has, in other times, filled your heart with bitterness towards me, and will realize what I have suffered. I trust that time, change, your grey hairs, all your experiences since I saw you, have been so many agencies to soften your

heart to the duty that now devolves upon you. Thomas Markington, you know what prayers have filled up all these weary years—what griefs and desolations have been my portion! You knew in what faith I have lived, by what hopes I have been sustained, and can foresee what questions spring from my heart at this moment. Thomas Markington, in the name of the Great Being who rules our destinies, I charge you to answer me truly. Did you rob me of my daughter?"

The impassioned words of the countess had no influence upon the hard heart of Maxley, considered on the score of mercy and justice. Her forgiveness, however, her grace and beauty, the pathos of her reference to her daughter, all the features of her conduct, caused him to feel that it was for his interest to be agreeable, and he accordingly replied:

"Your ladyship finds me quite willing to be frank and honest. I did rob you of your daughter!"

"I knew it, as surely as the conviction of my soul could tell me," said the countess, arising and approaching him, with a pallid face and trembling form. "You took my darling—you bore her away with you. Answer me truly another question! Is my daughter still living?"

"She is still living."

"Swear to the truth of this declaration, Thomas Markington," she cried, grasping his hand and raising it above his head—swear to me, on your soul's salvation, that my child still lives!"

"Again I am agreeable," was Maxley's response. "I swear to you, on my soul's salvation, that your daughter still lives."

"Oh, joy! joy! I thank you!"

With a long-drawn sigh of relief, the countess sank back into her seat and burst into tears, weeping for joy.

CHAPTER XVI.

A BLENDING OF JOY AND PAIN.

"To the cruel artificer of fate
Thus to refine and vary on our woes,
To raise us from despair, and give us hopes,
Only to plunge us in the gulf again,
And make us doubly wretched."

Trapp's "Abrams."

Assured by the words and conduct of the countess that he was in no danger of being pursued by the agents of the law for his misdeeds, Maxley became smiling and contented, and devoted all his faculties to the task of profiting by present circumstances.

"How to loosen her purse-strings?" was the thought that made his eyes sparkle, while her's were filled with such bitter tears. "How to bring before her an overwhelming necessity for money? How to make all this business pay?"

Knowing what she did of the character of the man before her, it was the manner of Maxley, even more than his words, that convinced her of the truth of his statements. She accordingly accepted as a fact the great truth of her daughter's existence, and the knowledge was a blessing that even her full heart would have found difficulty in pouring out—it was so sweet, so refreshing.

"After disappearing with my child," she soon proceeded, recovering her self-control, "you came here to live, I suppose?"

"Well, not directly," returned Maxley. "I went to another of the British islands, where I passed myself off as a young widower, and of course met with a great deal of sympathy. I could not take care of the girl myself, you see, and so a young woman happened to take a liking to me—or to the child, I don't know which—I decided to marry her, and she took the girl into her keeping. She wasn't of my rank in life," he added, smiling bitterly, "but that made no particular difference!"

"And what became of your wife, and what kind of a woman was she?" asked the countess with some anxiety. "I did not see her last evening!"

"Very likely not," responded Maxley. "After I had been married a short time, I found that the thorough hunt your ladyship and the Earl were making for me was likely to be troublesome. Moreover, my relatives had long since disowned me, and were as hard on me as the worst of my enemies, so that I could neither apply to them for money nor reveal my whereabouts to them. Well, as I had no money—not a penny—I finally decided to beat a retreat to the Isle of Man, and go into the fishing business. My wife died the very next year, and I have been a manipulator of herrings ever since!"

A cloud mantled the face of the countess, and she asked, in a faltering tone:

"And my child has been all these years under your tutelage, has she?"

"Not at all, your ladyship. I couldn't be bothered with her. I handed her over to a kind neighbour, with whom she lived until she was fourteen, and then I took her home to keep house for me. She returned to my house a refined and educated lady—irregularly

educated, it is true—but none the less educated. I had intended her to become a simple fisher girl, but she would do honour to the noblest station!"

The face of the countess expressed her heartfelt joy and relief at these tidings.

"Thank God!" she murmured. "The fear of finding her dead, or ignorant and unlovely is gone from me for ever! I will reward this good neighbour. Tell me her name!"

Maxley hesitated a moment, but the reflection that the countess was wholly in his power, and that he intended never to lose sight of her, decided him to be truthful, and he responded:

"Mrs. Wilson. She's been well off in her day, but is a widow. She taught Mona—I call the girl Mona—everything she knew, and the girl was apt to learn, besides being gentle and sweet-tempered!"

"You have relieved me of a great fear," said the countess, her lustrous eyes shining through tears. "But tell me, is my child good?"

"As good and beautiful as a saint," responded the villain. "She's a fair copy of yourself at her age. She is the belle and beauty of the island, and everybody idolizes her—everybody except me," he added. "She's altogether too dainty to suit my taste. She's had a suspicion this good while that I am not her own father!"

"My poor, lonely child!" murmured the countess, her face becoming glorified by the motherly love shining through it. "Her soul has answered, unknowingly, to my yearning calls for her. Oh, to clasp her in my arms, and to hear her call me mother!"

Clarkson wept in sympathy with her mistress's emotion, while Maxley braced himself comfortably against the wall of the cabin, and crossed his legs.

It caused him intense delight to see his lovely captive so deeply moved at his every sentence—to see her hang so eagerly upon his every word.

He felt already that he was in the way of bettering his fortune greatly through his dealings with the maiden and her mother.

"You do not seem to think a great deal of her," said the countess, after a pause.

"Well, what else could your ladyship expect of me?" he responded. "The girl has no thought or feeling in common with me. In fact, I couldn't do anything with her. I wanted her to marry some one of a dozen wealthy admirers, who have been hanging about the house for the past year or two, but she only looked coldly at them. This is one of the subjects on which she and I didn't agree. Very naturally we have not been on good terms for the last few months, for I had sickened of the herring business, and was anxious to have her better our fortunes by marrying a man with money. The trouble in the case was that she had fallen in love with a young revenue officer, and had no ears for any one on the island."

"A revenue officer? What sort of a man is he?" asked her ladyship.

"I know nothing about him," answered Maxley, "except that his name is Wynne—Captain Wynne—of the revenue service!"

"Wynno!" echoed the countess, with brightening eyes. "Is it possible?"

She mused a moment, and Maxley bit his lip, wishing that he had not been quite so communicative to her. He saw that she knew something of the young officer, and that the knowledge of Mona's love for him was not unpleasant to her.

"May I ask what are the present feelings between you and my daughter?" continued the countess.

"Tell me frankly and freely."

"Well, I have long regarded her as an encumbrance," he replied, "and have even been casting about in my mind the project of running away from her. She's in a struggle between her natural dislike of me and her sense of filial duty. On that account she hasn't been very agreeable to me."

The countess drew a long breath of relief.

"The room you were so pleased to admire last evening," pursued Maxley, "was her's. All that white frippery is her taste, and you occupied her own bed—or might have done—"

"Have I been so near to her as that?" cried the countess, excitedly. "Lain in her very bed, pressed the pillow on which her innocent head has slept, admired the arrangement of her room, and yet no subtle instinct warned me where I was? She was the daughter, then, who had gone to spend the night with a sick neighbour?"

Maxley laughed coarsely.

"I certainly alluded to her in making that statement," he said, coolly; "but I used the same latitude in its utterance as in the errand that brought you here!"

Her ladyship became pale and thoughtful.

"Ah!" she said. "You wished to keep her out of my sight—you feared my heart would declare her identity."

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Maxley replied only by a smile; but he shifted his position, and the expression on his bold, dark visage showed that the conversation had reached a stage that was not very pleasant to him.

Her ladyship regarded him narrowly and searchingly as if trying to read his very heart, and then said:

"Tell me—where is she?"

"That is the very point I was coming to," answered Maxley. "All I can say is that she is not accessible to visitors at this moment!"

"Explain yourself," said the countess, after a pause, of wonder and apprehension.

"The truth is, your ladyship, you have arrived just in time to assist me in a very important measure, namely, a search for your daughter!"

"A search for her?"

"Yes, your ladyship. Mona is missing. She disappeared no longer ago than last evening!"

The countess regarded the fisher with a severe gaze, full of suspicion, for a full minute, and then she said:

"This is a surprising communication. What do you mean to convey by the statement that Mona has disappeared? Has she run away from you, or has some calamity befallen her?"

"I mean to say, simply, that she has vanished!"

"And have you no clue to her present whereabouts?"

"That's another of the points I was about to consider. Permit me to say that Mona has, doubtless, been abducted, carried away from the island by some lawless admirer!"

The countess remained silent, hardly knowing what to think of her companion's declarations.

"The fact of the case is," proceeded Maxley, "Mona is as beautiful as—anything that could be imagined, and she has consequently had many admirers, some of whom have proposed to her, some of whom haven't had a chance to propose to her, and some of whom have learnt that there was no use in revealing their admiration to her. Now from all I hear, from all the information I have been able to gather, it seems that Mona has been seen, on certain occasions during the past year or two, by the famous Sea Wizard!"

"Seen by the Sea Wizard?" faltered the countess, her face paling to an ashy hue.

"Exactly, your ladyship—seen by the great Sea Wizard himself. I believe he calls himself Fear-nought. As to his character and reputation—"

"I know all about that," interrupted her ladyship, shuddering. "Do you mean to say that this cruel and heartless monster has seen my daughter?"

"It's not only seen her," answered Maxley, "but he's fallen deeply in love with her, as is the case with almost everybody who has seen her. It appears, from all I can discover, that the Sea Wizard has often found it pleasant or necessary to hide himself on Man, and that he thus became aware of Mona's existence, and of her attractions. How he met her, in what terms he proposed to her, what character he assumed, or how she rejected him, and what steps he took to seize her—all these are matters beyond my knowledge!"

"Seize her!" echoed the countess, becoming as pale as death. "What would you say? What horrible mystery?"

"Pardon me, your ladyship; but I must tell you the truth. Your daughter is in the most terrible captivity that can be imagined. The simple fact of the case is, that the Sea Wizard, despairing of winning her by fair means, came ashore last evening, while I was absent, and carried her off to his vessel!"

CHAPTER XVII.

A TRAP SET—BUT THE VICTIM WANTING.

Gene? Then am I ruin'd! Is it for this poor end That I have plann'd; and fled, and play'd the knave? Oh! mockery! *Amos.*

The anguish of the countess at the revelations of her companion was beyond expression. She was not only familiar with the reputation of the Sea Wizard, but she realised in an instant what difficulties would necessarily lie in the way of the maiden's rescue from such a man.

"And the poor child is now in the hands of that lawless being!" she finally murmured.

"I'm sorry to say it, your ladyship," declared Maxley, "but there's not the slightest doubt of her being, at this very moment, a prisoner on board his vessel!"

This was a deliberate falsehood, of course, on the part of Maxley, as he supposed the maiden to be, at that moment, imprisoned at Ballacreeby; but he had unwittingly come much nearer to the truth than was his custom.

"I can imagine nothing more horrible than such a situation," declared the countess, as soon as she could control her emotions. "Is there no way in which she can be rescued? Have you no clue to the hiding-place or retreats of the Sea Wizard?"

"That's the very thing I was about to mention to your ladyship. The smugglers have some friends on the island, and I doubt not but I could learn from one of them where he has gone, and what steps can be taken for the prisoner's release."

"Oh, if you could!"

"The thing can be effected, without doubt. The smugglers have long been importuning me to join them, and I could make a pretence of doing so, just for the sake of finding out where the Sea Wizard has gone."

"And will you?" echoed the countess, with a sudden hope.

"If you make it an object for me to do so," was his reply. "I believe I have made it plain to you that there is no particular tie between Mona and me, nothing that could induce me to put my life in jeopardy for her."

The countess had noticed this fact; and she could have stated that she was glad to hear that there was no love lost between the maiden and her pretended father.

"You mean," she said, "if I make it for your pecuniary interest to serve me?"

"Exactly. As your ladyship can see without trouble," and he extended his arms, glancing down at his ragged garments. "I am as poor as Job. In view of my feelings towards her, I shall be glad to make a few pounds out of your ladyship, and bring my acquaintance with her to a close!"

The countess had no difficulty in believing that money was of more account to him than the continuation of his assumed relationship with Mona, and she instantly rejoined:

"For all that you may do for me in this hour of tribulation, you shall be most amply paid. Restore my child to me, and you shall have more money than you have possessed during all those years in which you have been keeping her from me. Name your conditions."

"Well, I may say, in the first place, that the restoration of the girl to you can be effected by no one but myself. For years and years, as your ladyship is doubtless aware, the revenue vessels have been endeavouring to capture the famous Sea Wizard, but all in vain. All the vessels sent in pursuit of him have not so much as taken the first step towards his capture. They do not know where he hides, who are his friends, what are his sources of information, how he manages so cleverly to keep out of the way of his pursuers, or anything else about him. Such being the facts, your ladyship will not expect me to enter upon the rescue of Mona without money."

"Of course not," she answered. "You shall be duly paid. Name your conditions."

"Well, to begin with, I shall want two thousand pounds. This sum will enable me to bribe the smugglers, to collect information, and to take every necessary measure. Secondly, I shall want five thousand pounds additional the day Mona is restored to you, and is safe in your keeping. As to the rest, you will, of course, allow me to go unmolested and unpunished for all past offences?"

The countess did not hesitate a moment.

"I agree to your conditions," she said. "What would I not give to recover my only child—my precious darling child? The sums you have named shall be yours, Markington, on fulfilling your part of the obligation—the two thousand pounds in advance."

Maxley expressed his pleasure.

"You can depend upon me!" he exclaimed. "I need the money, and shall go off to Australia with it and start anew. I can easily gain access to the girl, for, to tell the truth, I know a great deal more about the smugglers than I'd like to confess to a revenue man."

There was a brief silence, and then the countess said:

"What is the first step to be taken? Do you think you could take me to my schooner in this darkness?"

Maxley shook his head.

"It's impossible," he said. "There's no knowing on which side of the island she's lying, or whether she's in port or not. No, no; if I'm to help you to recover Mona—and I can do it—you must stay on board here, and we'll run across to Liverpool, where I know you have money in bank."

"Oh, my lady!" cried the maid, "I beg you not to go. Let's go ashore. Captain Leslie will help us find the poor dear young lady!"

She paused, in consequence of Maxley's threatening looks.

The countess reflected for a few moments, and then said:

"Is your sloop perfectly safe, Mr. Markington?"

"Perfectly safe, your ladyship. I've made several long trips in her," the villain hastened to declare.

"She's a staunch little craft, built expressly for rough weather, and carries thirty tons. It is every bit as

safe as the schooner. I will scud across to Liverpool with you in the time we would be looking for the schooner, and then receive the money on your cheque. You can depend upon me," he added, thinking that he perceived an expression of doubt upon her countenance. "I want your money, for which you have no use, and you want your daughter, whom I can deliver up to you. I have every reason to keep my word, you see."

"I see," said the countess, after scrutinizing him narrowly. "If you take me over to Liverpool, I'll pay you the first instalment of your money to-morrow."

"Thank you," returned Maxley, his eyes gleaming with delight. "Once let me get a part of the money in my hands to work with, and I'll soon rescue Mona. And then I'll land you and the girl where you wish."

Again the countess became thoughtful; but from Maxley's manner, she did not deem it advisable to press the idea of reaching the schooner. Still, she did not wish to go off in this strange manner, without leaving word to Captain Leslie where she had gone, and what were to be her movements.

"I must write a note to Captain Leslie," she said. "I owe it to him to inform him of my plans. I will write it, and you can take us ashore with it, where I will pay some fisher to take charge of it."

"Certainly," said Maxley, with considerable hesitation, as he felt her ladyship's keen gaze upon him. "With pleasure!"

"Oh! my lady!" began Clarkson, pleadingly, and in dismay; but paused as she met the clear and encouraging gaze of her mistress.

"That will do, Clarkson," said the countess. "Give me pen and paper."

The maid reluctantly opened the travelling bag, as it lay in the berth, and produced a small travelling writing-case, which she presented to her mistress.

The sloop pitched and tossed so, that it was a difficult matter to indite a letter; but her ladyship was used to the sea in all its moods, and hastily wrote a few lines, which she enclosed and sealed, addressing the letter to Captain Leslie, at Port St. Mary, or Port Erin.

"There, Clarkson!" she said. "I have told the captain that we are bound for Liverpool!"

"Oh, my lady! my lady!" cried Clarkson, coming closer to her mistress, forgetful for the moment of Maxley's dark looks and threats. "I beg you not to go to Liverpool in this little vessel—we shall surely be drowned! And as for this man, he has no good in him. Oh, my lady, be advised by your faithful old servant, who loves you, for once—"

"Pence, Clarkson!" said her mistress, in a tone of infinite soothing and encouragement. "You need have no fears, for I have none. I thought you had been upon the sea too much to be frightened by a puff of wind. And now, Mr. Markington, will you take us ashore with the letter?"

"Certainly," said Maxley; "but I have been thinking that your ladyship need not incur the trouble and danger of a trip ashore. I can attend to the delivery of your letter to Captain Leslie. I will find a trusty person who will proceed to Port Erin and to Port St. Mary, early in the morning."

Clarkson, who had listened intently to the conversation, shook her head emphatically for her ladyship's benefit, unseen by Maxley.

"I had rather go myself," said the countess, after a thoughtful pause. "It is important that Captain Leslie should know where I am, what I have heard, and what I propose to do. In fact, I must have his advice and assistance forthwith."

"Of course—of course," said the scheming fisher with averted face. "All that is to be seen at a glance. No one can feel more clearly than I do the importance of all the measures you have stated. We disagree only with regard to the manner of communicating with Captain Leslie. My wish is to spare your ladyship the inconvenience of personally seeking him. The breeze has freshened greatly since we started, and the bay is too rough for your safety. Besides, my boat is rather small for three, with such a gale blowing. I had better go alone. The coast is full of people who will be zealous to serve your ladyship, and there is not the slightest necessity for your ladyship to encounter this fatigue and peril."

Thus entreated, the countess reluctantly consented to send her letter by Maxley, who dissembled his satisfaction, and said:

"Your ladyship may rest assured that I will act promptly and efficiently. Captain Leslie shall have the letter the instant he touches our island, whether he comes to Port St. Mary or to Port Erin."

"Shall we be safe here in your absence?" asked the countess.

"Entirely safe," Maxley responded. "Your ladyship had better remain in the cabin, keeping the door closed. The sloop rolls and pitches a little, of course, but she rides like a duck, head to the sea, and there is not the slightest danger."

He reassured himself that the light in the cabin was not visible from the shore, and then added:

"I shall not be gone a great while, and I pledge myself to arrange everything properly. Your ladyship must endeavour to be calm and hopeful in my absence, for from this moment until the girl is restored to you I shall be entirely devoted to your interests!"

He withdrew with a bow, and closed the little door of the cabin behind him.

"That's well got over," he muttered, with a sigh of relief, as he crossed the deck. "I was afraid she might give me trouble!"

He soon launched the little boat in which he and his guests had come off to the sloop. It was tossed about by the waves in a way that drew from him an ejaculation of satisfaction at not being accompanied by the countess. Springing into the frail craft, he seized the oars and commenced rowing, and was soon at the beach.

"Much good may this business do her!" he ejaculated, springing out upon the wet sands. It will be a long time before Captain Leslie sees her letter."

He drew the boat entirely out of water, and seated himself in it. His next measure was to tear the letter in pieces, and carefully bury the fragments in a hole which he made in the sands with his hands.

"I must be absent long enough to find a messenger and despatch him," he muttered. "The appearances must be perfect!"

He drew his boat still further away from the water, lest a wave larger than usual should by any chance rob him of it, and then commenced walking to and fro with a thoughtful air on the sands, in the utter darkness, giving himself up to the elaboration and perfection of the course of deception and hypocrisy upon which he had entered.

Nearly an hour thus passed.

At times low murmurs of bitterness broke from his lips, and at other moments he gave utterance to a low laugh of triumph; his thoughts appearing to change from bitterness to joy, and from disappointment to satisfaction.

"Enough of this," he finally ejaculated, returning to his boat. "I have been absent a sufficient time to accomplish the whole business. I have found a nice old fisher to take charge of her ladyship's letter, and he's already on the way to Port Erin. His name is Jack Seeton. I can answer for him."

With a bitter and malicious laugh Maxley returned his boat to the water, placed himself in it, and rowed seaward.

In a few minutes he rested on his oars, looking earnestly into the gloom around him, but he saw nothing of his vessel.

"The sloop ought to be whereabouts, I'm sure," he muttered, "and as dark as it is, she would make a spot on the water in this glare, sufficient to be visible. Can it be that I have drifted to the leeward?"

He heeded his boat to the wind, and made a few strokes with his oars, still looking excitedly around him; but the sloop was not there.

"There can be no mistake about my whereabouts," he added. "The light bears in the same direction it did when I started from the shore. Ah, by heavens!"

He started up abruptly, with a fierce ejaculation, which was followed by a volley of curses.

"Tricked—cheated!" he shouted, hoarsely. "The sloop's not in the bay. The countess has run away with it. Ten thousand curses upon her!"

(To be continued.)

THE name of the lady who challenges all England—and with that is included the world—as an archery shot, is an Irish young lady, Miss Bethon. We are told that she is expected to do wonders this year in England, and we are sure every bachelor Englishman will meekly say, "Let her do her utmost at my bosom for a target." The young lady in question is said to be equal in power of pulling the bow to any male competitor, and a keen eye for the bull's-eye equal to Robin Hood's. She belongs to the County Dublin Archers, and made the high score of 693 at Dublin, in the contest at that place for the brace.

BONAPARTE'S EARLY POVERTY.—M. Theirs, in his history of the Consulate, recites some very strange and previously unknown particulars respecting the early life and penury of Napoleon Bonaparte. It appears that after he had obtained a subaltern's commission in the French service, by his skill and daring at Toulon, he lived some time in Paris in obscure lodgings, and in such extreme poverty that he was often without the means of paying ten sous (ten cents) for his dinner, and frequently went without any at all. He was under the necessity of borrowing small sums, and even worn out clothes from his acquaintances! He and his brother Louis, afterwards King of Holland, had at one time only a coat between them, so that the brothers could only go out alternately, time and time about. At this crisis the chief benefactor of the future

emperor and conqueror, "at whose mighty name the world grew pale," was the actor Talma, who often gave him food and money. Napoleon's face, afterwards so famed for its classical mould, was during that period of starvation harsh and angular in its lineaments, with projecting cheek bones. His meagre fare brought on an unpleasant and unsightly cutaneous disease, of type so virulent and malignant, that it took all the skill and assiduity of his accomplished physician, Corvisart, to expel it, after a duration of more than ten years. The squalid beggar then, the splendid emperor afterwards—the threadbare habiliments and imperial mantle—the hovel and the palace—the meagre food and the gorgeous banquet—the friendship of a poor actor, the homage and terror of the world—an exile and a prisoner. Such are the ups and downs of this changeable life, such are the lights and shadows of the great and mighty.

UNDERCURRENTS.

Below our feet for fathoms down
Are channels where the waters flow
Unseen, connecting, in their course,
The lake and rivulet below.

The river flows towards the sea;
The lake alone, in distance lies,
Unconscious of the myriad streams
That make them each affiliates.

Thus it is with our daily lives;
Low 'neath the surface of the soul
Are channels which connect our fates,
And o'er us wield a strong control.

J. B. S.

REVENGE.

NED BRACE came out of the little church at Sandburn with a strange, desperate feeling that life was over with him, and that he had no farther interest in anything or anybody on earth.

He had just seen Kitty Anson married; Kitty Anson, who a few months before had been betrothed to him, whom he loved about as fondly as any rough young fellow ever loved a girl, and who had jilted him quite as coolly and cruelly as though she had been a fashionable city lady, instead of a young thing brought up in a rude fishing-village on the stormy coast of Cornwall, amongst the plainest of hard-working people.

Under the rough blue jacket of Ned Brace throbbed a great heart, capable of holding half the world, and no one could have imagined how very nearly it had come to being broken.

No one amongst his friends guessed it for a moment. They knew it was "all off between Ned and Kitty," but engagements were "off" over and over again, and no one hurt by it. "As good fish in the sea as was ever took out on it," muttered old granny Brace. "Reckon Ned won't have to look far for another gal," and that was the end of it to all save Ned and Kitty. What Kitty felt she kept to herself. It may have been regret or satisfaction, or perhaps both, for Ned was the handsomest young fellow in all Sandburn, and Gilbert Trevanion, the man she had married, the richest.

It was that fine house upon the hill, with the strip of land behind it, that won him his bride, every one knew that.

It made the matter no better for Ned—a little harder, perhaps, for he hated the struggle with poverty and the "fisherman's luck" which seemed always to be his portion more than ever; and, on the whole, he would have been better pleased to have been "cut out" by some one his superior in everything men most pride themselves upon.

Yet he had borne up bravely until this wedding-day, when an impulse he could not conquer had taken him to the church with all the rest of Sandburn.

It was mid-winter. Outside the snow was piled so high that the vehicles in which the party came had much ado to reach the church, but within it was very bright and gay. The Christmas decorations of evergreen had not been taken down, and the women had their best dresses on, and wore merry at the thought of a wedding. Ned went up into the little gallery occupied on Sundays by the Sunday scholars, and sat down there alone, and looked over the rails into the chancel.

There, under the great letters woven of evergreen—"The Lord is our Shepherd," which hung above the reading-desk—they stood together—Kitty Anson and Gilbert Trevanion. He so long, and lean, and awkward, with his sheepish face the colour of scarlet, and wrists and neck seeming to defy every effort of sleeves and collar to cover them.

She, such a fresh, dainty, rounded little beauty, as pink and white as any china shepherdess. Her snowy

dress a perfect fit, and the flowers in her brown braids coquettishly arranged, as though the coiffure had been the work of a Parisian hairdresser. The bridemaid was a great, broad-shouldered Cornish girl, in bright blue. The groomsmen a youth who looked even more sheepishly red and uncomfortable than Gilbert Trevanion himself. Ned saw neither of them, nor the white-haired clergyman, nor the giggling, whispering crowd in the church. There were to his eyes but two, Gilbert and Kitty. They stood out alone before him, the rest were mere meaningless shadows.

He heard her promise, repeated after the old man, that solemn promise—to take this man for better or for worse—for richer or for poorer, until death did them part. He heard her vow to love, honour, and obey.

He saw the kneeling forms hand in hand—watched the tiny glittering ring as it encircled her finger—and then—oh, no! he could stay no longer. He had not the power to see those lips touch her cheek.

He got away somehow while the bustle of congratulation and salutation was going on, and went down the road like one in a dream, with no more idea whether he was going than a man walking in his sleep.

The sharp sea air roused him. He had gone down to the shore, and stood looking out upon the water. The snow lay on the rocks around. Masses of floating ice gleamed blue and cold in the winter sunlight. Not a soul was in sight, not a boat on the water, only the skeleton masts of a wrecked vessel run aground some time before, across between him and the horizon.

It was a relief to know this, and to sink down, and under cover of the sounds of dashing water and wailing winds, moan and cry aloud:

"It's all done. It's all over. What does heaven let a fellow live to see the like of this for; I had never gone agin him, nor harmed mortal man; 'tain't just!"

His own words, in his own altered voice, frightened Ned. They were wicked he knew; but he was too desperate to be repentant just yet, he only stopped talking, and walked up and down in silence. What was left for him?

He couldn't go on fishing, and lead the old life now. To go somewhere seemed the best thing, and to go quickly, quite out of sight of the new couple's wedding bliss.

He had heard of a certain captain, anxious for hands for a whaling voyage, who had stopped at the "Good Man's Rest," a week before, and resolved to seek him out and offer his services.

There was danger in a whaling voyage, and Ned had some floating notion in his mind that dangerous enterprises were a comfort in time of trouble.

So, the next morning, at day break, you might have seen Ned Brace, with his little bundle of clothes on a stick over his shoulder, trudging moodily along the road, and might have seen him also, as on the summit of a hill, he stopped to take his last look at Sandburn, lift his arm on high, and clench his hand with a great black scowl toward the fine house just visible in the gray morning light.

"I've only got one prayer to pray now, Gilbert Trevanion," he muttered; "and that is that heaven will give me a good chance to have revenge on you for the way you've served me. If it does, I'll take it, or my name is not Ned Brace!"

The bridegroom would scarcely have slept more quietly could he have heard that wish and the tone in which it was uttered.

Yet, after all, they were but idle words. Ned Brace was going away from Sandburn, bound probably on long and dangerous voyages, and Gilbert Trevanion would stay at home in his fine house with his young wife. And the chances were they would never meet again this side of eternity. And on the other we shall, it is hoped, have left all fancies for revenge behind us.

Ned Brace found the captain, and shipped upon the Stormy Petrel, bound on a whaling voyage. She sailed in a week, and he went with her. It was a life of adventure—a rough, wild, dangerous life. Ned liked it.

Their voyage was a stormy one. A dozen times they were upon the verge of shipwreck. Ned thought it all the better. The wilder the storm, the greater the peril, the easier it was to forget Kitty Anson; and the happier, and more like himself he became. His comrades liked him; they were pleasant to him.

The germ of the sailor had dwelt in the heart of the fisherman, and it took deep root during that first voyage. After that he never thought of being anything else but a sailor, but looked to live, and die, and be buried in the deep salt sea.

A whaling voyage is generally a long one. It was three years before Ned Brace returned to his native land. Then he only remained a week or two on shore, and was off on another expedition, which lasted for two years. In all that while he had never been near

Sandburn—
that place,
Gilbert Tre-
vanion would
have hoped
during those
years:

"Let me
on that man
The opposi-
There had
the third vo-
from it on a
had been in
full of poor
in an encou-

The cap-
"Good Man
to him, and
It was a b-
all green
standing wh-
three stalw-
being kno-
lastly—Ne-
his eyes star-

Surely he
work stride
staring, and
he beated b-
and tallow-h-
He had no
in that nar-
gutter for tw-
in it. He had
Trevanion, of
some planks
ranged on his
"It is the l-
And so it w-

him. But ho-
induced to k-
dangerous vo-
Gilbert came
land.

"I know y-
stranger." "I
"I have not m-
I don't care i-
you know wh-
Gilbert took
"All right,"
can't help it,
such a lot o'
myself."

He was tur-
could not be-
come to the b-
"She isn't a
dead!"

"No," said
hardly know I
to drive' me
some unthin'
maniac, and
and a lot o'
(there's two o'
I ain't worth a
penny, you o-

He looked
his head upon
his satisfaction
Kitty Anson
whom she had
But his an-
was not foral-
coming, when
sawly near—f-
himself.

He went thr-
he slept to d-
again.

He saw little
sation they'd
waiting all th-
coming.

He was wai-
them, and dro-
The awful
coated waves
upon the hori-
sounded in the
saw what w-
Brace.

They did w-
remed also t-
there was ne-
three days of
gate, a wreck-
sinking.

Sandburn—had never once seen any individual from that place, and had never even heard the name of Gilbert Trevanion or of his wife uttered by mortal lips. He would not seek them, nor contrive, as some might have hoped to do, means to injure his rival. Yet during those five years his wicked prayer had always been:

"Let me have the chance of revenging myself on that man!"

The opportunity came at last.

There had been some difficulty in finding hands for the third voyage of the Stormy Petrel. Men shrunk from it on account of its danger, for the former voyage had been in some respects a disastrous one, and a boat full of poor fellows had gone down, never to rise again, in an encounter with a monster whale.

The captain, with his mate, once more up at the "Good Man's Rest." There the men he wanted came to him, and the ship's complement was made up.

It was a bright morning when the six Cornish men—all green hands—came aboard. Ned Brace was standing where he could watch them. First came three stalwart fellows, whom he well remembered as being known to him by sight. Next two strangers; lastly—Ned held his breath; his hands clenched; his eyes started half out of their sockets!

Surely he knew that form; surely that long, awkward stride was familiar to him. He stood quite still, and just then the man lifted his cap to cool his heated brow, and he saw the straw-coloured hair and tallow-hued skin of Gilbert Trevanion!

He had not sought him out—he had come to him. In that narrow prison they were to be cooped up together for two or three long years. There was a fate in it. He had not lifted a finger, moved a step. Gilbert Trevanion, of his own accord, had come to tread the same planks with the man who had prayed to be revenged on him!

"It is the hand of fate!" said Ned Brace.

And so it was, though the truth was hidden from him. But how could that well-to-do man have been induced to leave home and family for a long and dangerous voyage? He learnt why soon.

Gilbert came to him about sunset, and held out his hand.

"I know you," he said, "it's Ned Brace—you're a stranger."

"It's not my fault if I don't stay one," replied Ned. "I haven't sought you out; and as for shaking hands, I don't care to do it. I owe you a grudge yet, and you know why as well as I do."

Gilbert took back his hand.

"All right," he said, "if you're wrothy still, I can't help it, only it's a good while ago, and I've had much a lot o' trouble I'd almost forgot old times myself."

He was turning away, when Ned stopped him. He could not help it. Trouble? What trouble could come to the husband of Kitty Anson but one?

"She isn't dead?" he asked, quickly. "Kitty isn't dead?"

"No," said Gilbert, "she's alive, though you'd hardly know her. No, it's other trouble, a deal on't, but don't me a-whatin'. First, the house burnt down, an' then me an' I took sick, and there was doctor's bills and a lot o' physie. And Kitty and the children (there's two on 'em) they took chill. And, somehow, I don't want a penny. There, Ned, if you owe me a grudge, you ought to be satisfied, you ought."

He looked very miserable as he stood there, with his head upon his breast; and Ned Brace felt a certain satisfaction in the thought that this was the man Kitty Anson had married for his prosperity, and for whom she had jilted him.

But his anger was not diminished—his revenge was not forsaken; as he turned on his heel he saw it coming, whence or when he knew not; but it was surely near—for had not fate helped him? he asked himself.

He went through his duties with this before him; he slept to dream of it; he awoke to await for it again.

He saw little of Gilbert, and after that first conversation they did not address each other; but he was waiting all the time, feeling that his chance was coming.

He was waiting still when a storm gathered over them, and drove every other thought from every mind. The awful sky, the yet more awful sea, with its cresting waves, and strange lines of dingy white upon the horizon—the howl of the wind, the strange sounds in the interior of the vessel—all told the sailors what was near. None knew better than Ned Brace.

They did what they could. The Stormy Petrel seemed also to prepare herself for the conflict, but there was need of more than mortal power. After three days of horror the vessel scudded before the gale, a wreck. At the end of the third day she was sinking.

They took to the boats, as a last hope—such a frail one in that tempestuous sea. And still, without any effort on Ned Brace's part, Gilbert Trevanion was near him. There were ten men in the boat, the smallest of the three filled by those seamen.

And as he took his place, Ned found poor Gilbert crouched on the seat beside him. They were not to be parted yet.

Out in that awful storm, amidst waves mad to swallow them, the ten men were tossed unharmed until the gale subsided, and the sky grew bright, and the sea again became calm.

In the boat with them they had a bag of biscuits, a keg of water, and some cheese and pork—enough in all for four days, if carefully used. Heaven only knew when they might be taken up by a vessel. The sailors knew that and were more than careful. They doled out morsels of food and mouthfuls of water. They kept something to eat in the boat for six days. On the seventh there was neither crumb nor drop, and not a sail in sight.

All along Gilbert had been next to Ned Brace, and the latter had heard what no other ear could amidst the storm—a prayer, repeated over and over again:

"Let me live to see poor Kitty. Let me live to see poor Kitty once more."

Once, when the calm commenced, he had clutched Ned's arm, and whispered, hoarsely:

"She's thinking of me now. Every night she teaches little Tom to pray for daddy. Heaven help her, she's nigher bein' a widow than she knows this minute."

And Ned Brace had answered not one word, yet he heard plainly.

Now, when the food was gone, and hope well-nigh with it, Gilbert Trevanion's voice had sunk to a low gasp; but now and then Ned heard him whisper the same prayer, utter the same name—"Kitty, Kitty," always "Kitty."

The others seemed to have forgotten home and friends. They seemed only to think of food. Perhaps the more abstemious lives of the two fishermen enabled them to bear privation better; perhaps it was fate. Heaven only knows.

One after the other they dropped dead into the boat; and the living ones—but it is hard to tell—there was but one horrible meal to be made, and they made it as other shipwrecked sailors had done before. All but Ned and Gilbert.

The first said, "I'll starve rather," and turned his back that temptation might not assail him. The last moaned, "I could never kiss Kitty again," and closed his dull eyes. He had strength for little more. At last there were but four in the boat—Gilbert Trevanion, Ned Brace, and two others. They kept quite apart. There were two mad men and two sane.

The sailors opposite were waiting either for Gilbert or Ned to die. They did not wait long. When one arose with a glittering knife in his lean hand, strong with the madness of famine. Ned knew what was coming. He waited. In a hoarse, strange voice came the words:

"My hearty!"

"Aye, aye," said Ned.

"Taint no time for palaver. We can't wait. Your an old messmate—we won't touch you yet. But that fellow's got to go. You'll help us. If not, why—" And the sentence ended in an oath.

Poor Gilbert Trevanion grew paler. Horror, greater than words can tell, came into his hollow eyes. He clasped his fingers together and looked at Ned Brace.

"Swear that nobody shall ever tell Kitty," he panted. "It 'ud kill her, or send her crazy. Only let her know I died."

Revenge! Why, in all his dreams such revenge as this had never entered Ned's mind. The moment he had prayed for had come as he had never dreamt; and Ned in that awful instant comprehended his own great guilt.

The man with the knife was creeping towards them. Gilbert lay quite still, expecting death.

And Ned Brace uttered a wordless vow that he would save his enemy that fate or die.

"Keep off," he shouted, "you shan't lay hand on him. Keep off, I tell ye." And they clutched each other, and he flung the sailor into the bottom of the boat and got the knife into his own keeping.

The tables were turned.

Cowed for a while and helpless without his weapon, the sailor sunk down in a heap and glared at him. Gilbert caught Ned's hand and kissed it, and wept feebly.

It needed no violence; he was sinking fast. Just then (to the end of his life Ned believed it a miracle, though it was none) the hand that hid the knife within his vest struck something hard. A small flask, buttoned up there—a flask that, drawn to the light, still contained some brandy.

He had put it there when he went with a party on land, at a certain point they had touched for supplies, and had forgotten it.

There was life in the little flask; life for one—not for all.

He stooped over Gilbert and put it to his lips. He saw with joy that it revived him, and hid it, taking no drop for himself.

If those mad men had guessed it; but they did not. In that instant they had clutched each other like two wolves, and, in the struggle, had fallen overboard and gone down together.

Ned and Gilbert were alone in the rocking boat.

And there was one thought in the young fisherman's mind. To save Gilbert Trevanion's life, even at the sacrifice of his own. No words can paint the strength of the self-denial which kept the flask from his own lips, until angels record it in the books of heaven. Gilbert had it all, and Gilbert lived; Ned was growing weaker. So time passed, until far on the horizon appeared a sail. Ned Brace was just able to see it—just able to whisper:

"Keep up a heart, you'll live for Kitty yet."

Then with both hands he rent away the blue check shirt he wore, and tied it to the boat, so that it would flutter in the breeze.

"They'll see it," he said, "and you'll live to get aboard—the brandy'll keep you up. I aint took none. You was a married man, and there aint no wife a-waiting for me, nor yet no children."

And with that last effort he sunk down—blind, deaf, helpless and worn-out; Gilbert wept and faintly wrung his hands.

Two hours after the vessel saw the signal, and they were taken on board—Gilbert faintly breathing, Ned Brace to all appearance dead.

Yet he did not die; faintly and slowly, life crept back to him—sense and strength returned. He awoke to find Gilbert Trevanion his ever-watchful nurse, to hear his thanks for himself and Kitty. And, six months after, the good ship entered harbour, and they went together into Sandburn, welcomed like men arisen from the dead.

But when the day came on which Ned Brace stood before Kitty and her children, and Gilbert said—"Only for him, Kitty, I'd a been dead by an awful death; I daren't speak on; and he took care on me, and robbed himself to save me, and there ain't nothing I could ever do would be too much to pay him;" and she, so pale and worn, sunk down at his feet and wept and blessed him.

"Taint me to thank, but God," Ned said. "You don't know how I felt to you afore. I wanted revenge, seein' I felt things had gone so hard. But when it came, and I mought ha' seen it, I know'd I'd been a-praying to Satan all the time, 'stead o' Him, and 'ud rather hev died than took it, and go where it 'ud ha' taken me."

And from that time Ned Brace dwelt in Sandburn, and the two fishermen were friends. And in time there crept other hopes into Ned's heart, and eyes as bright as Kitty Anson's once were shone upon him; and to-day he sits among tall sons and daughters by a fireside of his own, and envies no man living.

M. K. D.

THE MASTERS OF THE NAVY.—We understand that the Admiralty are about to remove all distinctions between the officers for general service and those on whom hitherto has especially devolved the navigation of her Majesty's ships. With this view they will abolish the ranks of staff-commander, master, second-master, masters' assistant, and naval cadet of the second class; and, for the future, her Majesty's ships will be navigated by lieutenants and commanders. An increase of pay will most likely be granted to those officers who perform this duty. In addition to this, all staff-commanders above 20 years' service will become captains, while all other staff-commanders and masters will become commanders and lieutenants, and second masters second lieutenants; but all these officers will have to learn gunnery. Masters' assistants above 16 years of age are to become midshipmen.

SLEEPING.—It is nothing short of murderous for one person to sleep habitually in a room less than twelve feet each way; and even then the fireplace should be kept open, and the door ajar, or the windows raised at bottom, or lowered at top, (both better); this creates a draught up the chimney, and carries off much of the foul air generated during sleep. A little fire, or a lamp, or jet of gas burning in the fire-place, increases the draught. As the air we breathe is the chief agent for removing all impurities from the blood, the more effectual as it is purer, it must be plain to all that the room in which we spend a clear third of our entire existence should contain the purest air possible, and that this must have an immense influence on the health. Hence, our chambers should be large and airy—the higher above the ground the better—with windows facing the south, so as to have all the benefit of sunlight and warmth, to keep them dry and cheerful. Besides a few handsome pictures or paintings on the walls, illustrating what is beautiful and elevat-

ing, there should be no furniture except a table, a dressing-bureau, and a few chairs, all without covering. With the exception of the bedding and a clean dry towel, there should be no woven fabric, neither carpet, curtains, nor hanging garments; for these, especially if woollen, retain odours, dust, dampness, and seeds of corruption and disease for months. There should be a hearth-rug at the bedside to prevent the bare feet from coming in contact with the cold floor, on getting out of a warm bed. No liquid except a pitcher of cold water should be allowed to remain five minutes in a sleeping-room. The deadly carbonic acid gas which comes from the lungs at every out-breathing of the sleeper, rises to the ceiling in warm weather, but falls to the floor when the room is freezing cold. Hence, in summer, the purest and coolest air in a room is near the floor; in winter, the foulest.

The Crown authorities have recently taken possession of some curious old gold rings, found at Inverness, as treasure trove. They are composed of twisted gold wire, without any soldering, but hammered at the ends so as to be completely fastened. The gold is of the purest quality, and the workmanship, though rude, is not indelicate. They are evidently of great antiquity.

LADY VENETIA.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

We have here a work wrought counter to the stars and destiny,—
A bad knight's triumph o'er an honest one.
No shield received the assassin's stroke;—

Then plunged
Against such weapons, I am but a child.

German Play.

On the following evening the visit to the treasure chamber was made. The accumulation of rubbish that barred the way prevented the marquis from suspecting that it had before been entered, for Baldoni had suddenly replaced the debris he had cleared away for his own convenience.

He mounted on with equal perseverance to open a passage for himself, and together the two entered the chamber. The heir looked around with much interest, but his first feeling was one of disappointment, for the place was far less interesting than he had expected, and so much of the treasure had been removed, that he could only consider what remained worthy of so elaborate a hiding-place. He expressed this, and Baldoni was ready with his reply.

"The life led by your brother doubtless drained the late marquis of much of the wealth that had accumulated here. Count Argostino frequently drew on him for large sums, and I have often felt surprise at the facility with which they were furnished to him. As they were transmitted through my agency, I can speak with certainty on this subject. Your brother placed little value on money, and your father could never refuse his most exorbitant demands."

Vittorio glanced around the walls, and abruptly asked Baldoni if he knew of any other places where the treasure might be hidden. Baldoni replied that he knew of no other places, but that he would be glad to search for them if he were paid for his services. Vittorio then asked him if he knew of any other places where the treasure might be hidden. Baldoni replied that he knew of no other places, but that he would be glad to search for them if he were paid for his services.

"Give me the lantern; I wish to examine for myself," said Vittorio. Baldoni readily complied, for he had little fear that the marks detected by the quick eyes of Pepita would now be seen. He had carefully filled them up with cement, coloured to resemble the stone wall so perfectly as to defy detection. But when he saw the marquis swinging the lantern to and fro, examining with piercing gaze the jagged projections of the rough surface, cold drops gathered upon his brow, and his knees shook together. He felt as if he were in a trap.

A better danger occurred to the steward of which he had not previously thought. Lucia, even in her dreary captivity, sometimes sang; he had heard her more than once, though of late despair had quenched the music of her voice. If she should raise a chant at this most unpropitious moment, the walled sounds would penetrate the wall, and all his stock-in-trade be laid bare. He was so intensely strained to detect any sound which might betray the vicinity of his captives; but a dead, unbroken silence reigned, and after a few moments, he gaspingly said to himself, "The atmosphere here is suffocating me, my lord. I must have air, or I shall become seriously ill. Let us hasten to return above ground."

The marquis regarded his pale face with surprise. He at once said:

"You do seem very ill. Let us go without delay, for it would be no trifle for you to become helpless in such a place as this. I have no use at present for the money and jewels hoarded here. The chamber can remain as it is, till I wish to add to, or take from, its treasures."

They passed out, closed up the aperture, and retraced their steps in silence. As they approached the outer air Baldoni recovered from his perturbation, and when they once more stood on terra firma his usual self-possession was quite restored.

Days, gradually lapsing into weeks and months, passed away in monotonous quiet, and the young marquis still lingered near his beloved home, occupied in hurrying on the repairs at the castle, that it might be in readiness to receive its future mistress when the time for his marriage arrived.

It had been definitely settled that, at the expiration of a year from Lady Venetia's death, he was to give his hand to Pepita; and her haughty bearing towards those whom she had formerly treated as her equals had already informed them that she was to assume the state of lady of the castle at no distant day.

The friends of Vittorio were annoyed at the melancholy he contemplated making, and they marvelled how he could so soon be consoled for the loss of his wife.

But when they saw the fair syren who held him spell-bound by her enchantments, they no longer felt surprise, and many of them thought that, under such temptation, they should have proved no wiser than he had been.

Each day seemed to add some new attraction to this dangerous being. The light of gratified ambition which shone in her eyes, the gushing joyousness that revolved in her tones, might well be mistaken by her betrothed for perfect happiness in the love that blossomed her lot.

Yet bewitched, enthralled as he was, her lover often felt that something was wanting to himself which all Pepita's grace, all her blandishments, could not supply.

He felt the need of that sympathetic union which should bind together those contemplating so sacred a bond as marriage; and at times he doubted if he had done well in lauding himself so precipitately to her. "Was she indeed the one bright spirit which could yet make up to him for all he had lost?" he often asked, in gloomy doubt; but one glance from her radiant eyes, a smile from her laughing lips, put all such fears to flight, and when beside her, he was, at least, contented.

Every care was taken to render the young heir's stay beneath the roof of the steward as agreeable as possible. His wants were anticipated, his tastes attended to with quiet tact, and his young hostess was always ready to walk, ride, or chat with him.

The usual restraints of Italian life were ignored in her case, for Pepita was too independent to submit to them, even if her rank in life had imposed their necessity upon her.

The story told by Baldoni and his daughter with reference to an agent who had been sent from England by Rispoli to remove Lucia thither was confirmed to the marquis by a visit he made to Rosella, to inquire if any news had been heard from the nun.

Impelled by he knew not what impulse, he one day mounted his horse, and never drew rein till he reached the widow's cottage.

The lame child was in his cradle near the door, with his mother spinning beside him. She remembered her former guest at once, and arose with a glad smile to bid him welcome.

"Ah, signor," she said, "I hope you are the bearer of tidings from the good sister and that sweet young creature who left my house with her, intending to go to Reggio. They went much further than that, but not so far but you may have heard from them in all these long months."

"I am sorry to say that I have heard nothing, and I came hither to-day with the vague hope that you could tell me that Sister Maria has safely reached her destination."

"I hope there is no doubt of that, signor. In the letter that came for me after they went away the good sister assured me that their promises to me should yet be fulfilled. You see the young signorina found out that my crippled boy has musical talent, and she said she would have him educated for a violin player, and the letter said she would still take us to England, and do something for us there."

She finished speaking with a deep sigh, and her visitor regarded the child with sudden interest. He asked Rosella how long she had been in the house.

"Are you desirous that your son shall follow the calling of a violinist?"

"It is all he is fit for, signor, for he will never walk again."

The marquis took the long, slender fingers of the boy in his own, and after a pause said:

"If your friends forget their pledge, I will take charge of the boy's future. He shall have instruction at the proper time, but he is yet too young and feeble."

"Ah! that is the worst of it. Signorina Lucia promised that Pietro should have the attention of a good surgeon, who might restore him to something like health; but he can never be strong again. He does not speak to you, for he has fallen into a state of dullness that seems almost like idiocy since the signorina left us. Ah! she made a new creature of him while she was here."

The young man compassionately regarded the sunken cheeks and hollow eyes of the poor lad. He now unclosed his lips, and said, in a feeble voice:

"No, mother, I am not stupid; but I think all the time of that sweet angel who is gone from us now: to come back to me. Pietro will die before help comes from over the sea."

"Hear him now," exclaimed Rosella, "that is the way he breaks my heart when he does talk."

Vittorio kindly spoke to the child:

"My little fellow, I will take care of you, and have you made strong enough to go across the ocean to your young friend. Does that satisfy you?"

"I do not know," responded the child, in a dull tone. "It seems to me that the sun went away from me when Lucia left me."

With a sharp pang the listener felt that the helpless cripple had expressed the feeling that lay deep in his own heart. He turned away, and after a pause spoke to Rosella:

"Will you let me read the letter of which you spoke? I shall be glad to see if Sister Maria anticipated contentment in the new sphere she was about to enter on."

"Certainly, signor; the letter is at your service." She went into the interior room, and presently returned with an envelope bearing the postmark of Reggio.

The marquis hastily took from it a folded paper, as which were traced the following lines, in a bold, distinct hand, which he thought characteristic of the supposed writer:

"Reggio, December 21, 18—"

"DEAR ROSELLA,—Just as we reached this place, and Lucia was preparing to make her debut on the stage, a stranger who had sought her at Colonia, arrived, and instantly came to her with the most welcome and extraordinary news."

"Signor Rispoli, her father, had sent the agent from England to claim and bring his child to him. After enclosing a draft for a considerable sum of money we sent to Lucia, and in it Signor Rispoli explained that it would be dangerous for him to return to Sicily, as he has been embroiled with the government."

"Such vouchers were furnished of the genuineness of Signor Mercadi's mission, that we could not doubt the wonderful news he brought. With some difficulty Lucia's engagement was annulled, and we shall set out for Palermo to-morrow, to embark there for England."

"I write these lines that you may suffer no uneasiness on our account. So soon as we are settled in our new home, Lucia bids me say to you that she will send you the means to carry out her plan for your son, or, if you prefer it, she will have you both brought to live with her. Enclosed is a trifle for present use, and by the time it is spent you will probably hear from us again. With kindest love to little Pietro, I am your unfailing friend, "MARIA."

"And this is all you have received?" he asked, as he folded the lines and returned them to the envelope. "Yes, signor; but it seems to me that I should have had another letter by this time, if they have not forgotten us."

"You must not be discouraged. It is a long distance to England, and letters are long in coming hither. If you hear from the nun again, I shall be glad to know it. In the meantime, I will request Dr. Strozzi to visit your son regularly, and when he is stronger we will see what can be done for him."

"Oh! thank you, signor. Pietro needs something, but I cannot tell what it is. The doctor may find out, and I am very grateful to you."

The marquis escaped from her thanks, and in a gloomy mood returned to his late home. The letter seemed genuine, and doubts that might have arisen in his own mind were set at rest by its personal nature. There could be no doubt now that Lucia had gone to her new home, and in her elation at her own prosperity she had forgotten her obligations to those she left behind her.

This was in unison with the character imputed to her by Pepita; but still the conviction gave him a bitter pang, and her fair image arose before him with its truthful eyes and lovely smile, as if to reproach him for believing that she could be so false as he had been taught to believe her.

Baldoni's propensity had foreseen this visit, and

provided for it, for he felt sure that at some time the marquis would seek Rosella, and inquire concerning those who had taken refuge in her house; besides, it was necessary to account to the woman herself for the disappearance of Lucia and her companion, and the letter was sent, with a small sum of money enclosed as a gift from her late guests.

The castle now began to assume an appearance of splendour it had never before worn. Modern apartments were erected over the ruins of the old, and decorative art was exhausted in the embellishments the marquis interested himself in superintending. He possessed fine taste, and little value for money, except for the uses to which it could be put; and a fairy palace arose before the enchanted eyes of Pepita as the home over which she was to preside.

Perhaps there was some pride in this on the part of her betrothed, for he wished to show those who envied at the *mésalliance* he was about to form, that he thought nothing too elegant for the plebeian bride he was soon to take to his bosom.

Pepita's fate once secured, Baldoni was resolved to bring matters to a crisis with Lucia. She should choose the alternative between his hand or the slow gangs of death from starvation. If she could be brought on to consent to give him her hand, he intended to remove her from her place of confinement to some safe asylum where the marriage ceremony should at once be performed; and then he would proclaim her rights, claim her estates, and account for her sudden re-appearance by some story as plausible as the one with which he had already so successfully deceived Vittorio.

Secure in the ultimate success of his villany, the steward suffered no remorse for the ruthless part he was playing. He did not give his entire confidence to Pepita, though she was aware that Lucia was yet in their vicinity, and she shrewdly suspected that the walls beneath the chapel had become her prison.

She knew that her father provided for a larger family than their own, and she had satisfied herself that every week a basket filled with bread, wine, and oil disappeared from his room. Once he had required her assistance to procure some articles of female apparel which were never used about his cottage.

She kept her suspicions to herself and quietly obeyed his commands, with the certainty in her own mind that the helpless captive would now never be permitted to interfere with herself.

What her father's ulterior plans were she cared not; the Marquis of Colonna once her husband, she believed she could defy the world to separate him from her, or induce him to believe that she was other than what was her policy to appear—his infatuated, adoring daughter.

Pepita was too acute not to perceive that her betrothed often endured rather than reciprocated, her caresses; that there were days of gloom in which his thoughts were far away from her, and the dreamy sadness which sometimes stole over him even in her presence, warned her that the forgotten past was arising before him, stealing all the brightness from his life.

At such times she used all her fascinations to bring him back to the present, with its promise of happiness in a union with herself; but if Vittorio had dared to examine his own heart, he would have found there no genuine love for the brilliant enchantress who had woven her spells around him till he felt there was no escape from them.

Pepita had thrown herself on his compassion by the passionate avowal of her affection for himself, and qualified vanity had accomplished the rest. Vittorio was not weaker than most other men of his age, and he could have resisted the blandishments of this consummate actress.

The anniversary of the marchesa's death drew near, and it was arranged that Pepita should make her promised visit to Signora Vanelli, and while in Palermo choose the magnificent trousseau she intended to provide.

The marquis was to follow her, and bring her back to her home in time to attend the religious rites he intended to have celebrated in honour of his father's memory. A month later the marriage was to take place, and the newly-wedded pair make a tour through Italy.

The bride-elect had privately determined that their travels should terminate in Paris, in which city she would induce the marquis to remain for several years to come. During their absence, her father could bring his plans to bear, and, even if he married Lucia, he could remove her from all chance of an encounter with Vittorio after his return to Sicily.

She exacted from her betrothed, a promise to follow her within a month, for she feared a prolonged absence from her side would weaken the slender hold she had established over his affections. A fear amply borne out by the result; for, when able to reflect upon his position without the glamour of her smiles and honeyed

words, the marquis found in his heart a strong feeling of aversion to the thought of sacrificing his freedom to a woman who had lured him into an engagement of marriage, while his regrets for the wife he had lost should have filled his mind to the exclusion of every thought of love for another.

He bitterly felt that it was too late to recede now; his honour was pledged, and Pepita should bear his name, even if wretchedness followed their union.

Of late he dreamed constantly of Lucia. He did not see her exultingly in her new-found prosperity, as he had been taught to believe her; but pale, languid, perishing—crying to him for help in her dire extremity.

One night he awoke with a cold dew bursting from every pore, and the imploring voice he had heard in his vision seemed still sounding in his ears. The wailing cry was:

"Help—help, Vittorio, or I perish!"

And so vivid was the impression, that it was long before he could convince himself that it was a dream.

Many times did the unhappy young man seek Father Boniface, hoping to derive from him some consolation in the distracted state of his mind; but, since the death of his old master, the priest had fallen into a state of passive insanity, and his memory was completely gone. A young brother was employed to attend on his declining years, and perform the religious services Father Boniface was no longer capable of attending to; but the marquis shrank from confiding to him the restless and unhappy state of his mind.

He was glad when the time for his visit to Palermo arrived, and he plunged into the gaieties of the place with but one desire—to get rid of his own thoughts. Again beside Pepita, her influence over him revived, and he fancied that only in a perpetual union with her could he hope for a shadow of the happiness he had once enjoyed.

With childish glee she exhibited to him the beautiful articles which were daily brought for her inspection, and he endeavoured to atone for his own want of loyalty by bestowing on her the most expensive presents. His mother's diamonds were re-set for her use, and her jewel-casket was even more brilliant than that of Lady Venetia had been. In the exultation of her heart Pepita felt that she could almost love so generous a suitor, and she looked forward to a life of brilliant gaiety and unbroken prosperity.

She permitted no fears of retributive justice to dim the bright vista that opened before her. Callous to remorse, thoughtful only for her self-indulgence, she cast into oblivion the crimes by which her present prosperity had been attained, and revelled in the sunshine of her lot as gleefully as a child might have frolicked in a garden filled with flowers.

Signora Vanelli broke through her usual habits of retirement, and filled her house with gay company. At the earnest solicitation of Pepita, she prepared to return with her to Colonna, to be present at her marriage, and the party embarked in the gayest spirits—all save the bridegroom-elect; for it was evidently an effort with him to keep up the semblance of enjoyment.

Why this cloud had fallen on him, Vittorio could not have explained. It was one of those mysterious warnings to a being hovering on the verge of a great danger which sometimes come to persons of highly strung nervous temperament, and he felt as one about to topple into the abyss from which there would be no escape.

Too late! too late! was the cry that sounded over in his heart; and at moments he felt as if he would gladly flee away from all he possessed, and by the sacrifice of wealth and station, preserve the freedom he was about to sacrifice to a woman for whom he could feel no respect; whose supposed devotion to himself was her only claim upon him.

The voyage to Catania was unbroken by storm or cloud, and two days before the anniversary of his father's death, the Marquis once more took possession of his ancestral home, now fitted up with every elegance and luxury that wealth could command. The old servants were re-instated in their places, and, dissatisfied as many of them were at the prospect of having Pepita to reign over them as mistress, they set about making preparations for the splendid bridal which was so soon to take place. Signora Vanelli took up her abode at the castle, and at the earnest solicitation of its master, the steward and his daughter also removed thither.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Where are they?
No one is here! They leave me all alone—
Alone in this sore anguish of suspense!

Here is yet
Some frightful mystery that is hidden from me.
Ibid.

THE anniversary of the sad catastrophe which had brought desolation to Colonna, and death to its mas-

ter, arrived. As Vittorio had been unable to join in the religious ceremonies which at that time consecrated dust to dust, he wished to have high mass performed at La Tempesta on that evening when he could take part in the orisons offered for the repose of his beloved father's soul.

The chapel was draped in mourning, and consecrated candles burned upon the altar, while clouds of incense arose from the censers swung by the young attendants of the officiating priest. Though careless of such sacred things; possessing no faith in a future which her mundane soul could not comprehend, Pepita assumed a mourning garb for the occasion, and accompanied her betrothed to the church.

Night had fallen, and the countless stars glittered in the firmament above as if in rivalry with the lights that gleamed from the windows of La Tempesta, which stood out clearly defined against the sapphire sky. The two walked side by side, yet never had their feelings been less in union. One sad, depressed by a subtle weight he found it impossible to shake off; the other radiant, triumphant in the thought that this lugubrious ceremony once over, no thought would be left but for the brilliant pageant in which she was so soon to play a prominent part.

But few words passed between them. The Marquis had just returned from a long jaunt over the mountains, undertaken in the hope that exercise in the open air would restring his nervous system, and enable him to appreciate the happiness that awaited him. He returned greatly fatigued, and now he was suffering too much from the languor of reaction to exert himself to talk, even if it would have been decorous to do so under the circumstances.

Pepita possessed tact enough to know that her usual prattle would be unbecoming and distasteful, and she uttered only a few tender words, assuring him of her entire sympathy with the sad thoughts that filled his soul.

He pressed her hand in silence, and together they entered the chapel, which her busy imagination decked in a far different manner, as she anticipated the removal of the solemn pageantry of death, and the appearance of a brilliant bridal party before the altar.

The peeling organ sent forth its music, and sweet voices arose in the chants that filled the building with their echoes.

Baldoni and Signora Vanelli had already taken their places, and the house was crowded with the peasants belonging to the estate.

Father Boniface sat within the altar rails, with his hands meekly crossed on each other, though he did not distinctly understand why he was there; and his young assistant, aided by another priest, performed the mass.

It was but half over, when there was a commotion around Signora Vanelli, and she was taken out nearly insensible. She had been indisposed during the day, and the crowd and excitement proved too much for her.

Pepita, glad of the opportunity to escape from a scene in which she took no interest, hastily whispered to the marquis that her old friend was subject to such attacks, and required immediate attention. Of course, she must return with her to the castle.

To this he readily assented; she glided from his side, and he bent his head in earnest prayer for the departed.

The services were long and exhausting. When the music again pealed through the house, the marquis arose from his kneeling position, and, overcome with fatigue, stretched himself upon the cushioned seat of the pew, which had been separated from the rest of the church by a curtain placed around it by the orders of his late father.

Gradually the soothing strains faded into dream melodies, and Vittorio lay in that deep slumber produced by physical exhaustion.

When the last note died away, and the benediction was pronounced, Baldoni looked around for the young marquis.

Discovering no evidence of his presence, he grimly smiled as he thought that he must have followed his daughter from the church. He passed the curtained recess in which the lords of the manor usually sat when attending service, and slightly lifted one of the dark folds of cloth, but the lights were suddenly extinguished, and he did not detect the sleeping figure within.

The doors were closed, and the chapel lay buried in silence and gloom for many hours, yet the sleeper lay unconscious that he was locked up alone in the church.

The moon arose and cast its light through the windows; a gleam fell upon his face, and aroused him to the bewildered feeling that he was not in his own apartment, and it was several moments before he could recall what had happened; or remember why he was there.

With perfect consciousness came the conviction

that he was alone in the chapel, and he was about to arise and move toward the door which opened behind the altar into the priest's apartments, when the sudden turning of the lock upon the front door caused him to surmise that he had been missed, and some one was coming in search of him.

The marquis lifted the curtain aside, and unclosed his lips to speak, but he was struck dumb by the appearance of a figure wrapped in a dark slouching garment, and wearing a sombrero pulled over his brows. In one hand he carried a basket, and in the other a dark lantern, and he passed at once up the centre aisle to one of the pillars that supported the altar.

Breathless with surprise, the marquis held the drapery carefully aside and watched his further proceedings. He felt sure that the person of the intruder was familiar to him, but under his disguise, he did not recognize Baldoni.

The man placed his basket on the floor, produced a key, and inserted it beneath some ornamental carvings near the base of the pillar, and the mass, which Vittorio had supposed solid, unclosed before him.

He passed into the aperture, took the basket up, and removing the key, closed and locked the door behind himself.

The marquis rubbed his eyes, pinched his arm, to assure himself that he was not dreaming, and then took the resolution to fathom the mystery at whatever risk to himself. He quietly left his place of concealment, felt for the pistols he always carried, and ascertained that they were in readiness for immediate use. He then took up a position near the altar, from which he could command the person of this midnight visitor when he again issued from his subterranean journey.

Vittorio had not hitherto been aware that any vaults, save the family burying place, existed beneath the chapel, and he was resolute to find out for what illegal purpose they were now used; for the idea of some contraband traffic was the only one that occurred to him.

Five, ten minutes passed away; the first tremour of his nerves at the singular discovery he had made subsided, and the avenger stood cool and collected, ready for any emergency that might arise.

At length the muffled sounds of approaching steps were heard, the sharp click of the lock succeeded, the key was withdrawn, and again the door unclosed, and the dark form of the mysterious visitor stood before him, with a mask of crape drawn over his face.

The door sprang to behind him, and closed with a spring. The excited young man rushed forward, with his cocked pistol in his hand, and exclaimed:

"Wretch! who are you, and what is your purpose in coming hither at such an hour as this?"

But half the words had passed from his lips, when Baldoni drew a pistol from his bosom and aimed at his adversary without uttering a word; both fired at the same moment, and both balls took effect.

In the fall of the steward the lantern was extinguished, and the moonlight streamed on two lifeless bodies that lay prone and helpless, with the life blood flowing on the marble floor.

The thick walls of the chapel deadened the simultaneous report of their weapons, and those who slept in the adjoining building were unconscious of the tragedy which had been enacted so near them.

(To be continued.)

CARDINAL WISEMAN.—It is stated that Cardinal Wiseman has left a memoir on the condition of the Roman Catholic Church of England, and on his influence in developing the interests of his religion in this country. At the end of the memoir are statistical tables, which are intended to show that Roman Catholicism has made continual progress in England since the Cardinal's arrival, and that by his direct or indirect influence 71 churches and 35 Roman Catholic convents have been built in London and its environs only. Also, that the priests who were under the immediate orders of the Cardinal numbered 1,338 in England, (comprising 17 bishops,) 183 in Scotland, (comprising four bishops,) which will give a total of 1,521 priests, showing a considerable augmentation of their numbers. In 1829 there were only 29 Roman Catholic churches in London, and one convent; in 1857 there were 46 churches and 11 convents; and in 1863 there were 117 churches and 46 convents.

MAGNESIUM WIRE AT THE GREAT PYRAMID.—Professor C. Piazzi Smith, in writing from the "East Tomb, Great Pyramid," Feb. 21, says:—"The magnesium wire light is something astounding in its power of lighting difficult places. With any number of wax candles which we have yet taken into either the king's chamber or the grand gallery, the impression left on the mind is merely seeing the candles, and whatever is very close to them, so that you have small idea whether you are in a palace or a cottage; but burn a triple strand of magnesium wire and in a moment you see the whole apartment, and appreciate the grandeur

of its size and the beauty of its proportions. This effect, so admirably complete, too, as it is, and perfect in its way, probably results from the extraordinary intensity of the light, apart from its useful photographic property, for, side by side with the magnesium light, the wax candle flame looked not much brighter than the red granite of the walls of the room. There come parties—often many parties—of visitors to see the Pyramid every day without fail, and they come amply provided, too, with all sorts of means and appliances to enjoy the sight—i.e., with everything but the needful magnesium wire; and one waistcoat-pocket full of that would be worth a whole donkey-load of what they do bring up to enable their souls to realize the ancient glories of the internal scene.

THE FATHER'S SECRET.

It was towards the middle of a day in early spring. The roads were rough and muddy, the trees had hardly shaken of their winter garb, while here and there, along by the fences and high ridges, still lay banks of snow.

The road of which we write was almost unfit for travel; but yet there were those who were obliged, at all risks, to force their way over it.

Where the road bent around the foot of a hill, running within a few feet of the water's edge, an old man and a youth had stopped in their walk, and seated themselves upon a stone.

The old man's hair was gray with age, but still the weight of years did not sit very heavily upon him, for he was yet strong and robust, though, at the present time, he appeared somewhat fatigued from the effects of travel.

The youth could not have seen more than fifteen summers at the farthest.

His eye was bright and piercing, his brow was bold and open, but his frame was weak, and his whole physical structure gave unmistakable signs of premature decay; yet, as they sat there together, eating their noonday meal—the one aged and strong, the other young and feeble—a close observer would have discovered a similarity of features that betokened the father and child.

"Father," said the youth, as he brushed the crumbs of bread from his lap, "how much farther have we to walk?"

"Not much," replied the old man. "The cottage cannot be far from here. At all events, we shall reach it before dark."

"And shall we have to live there always, father? Shall I have to work in the fields?"

"Yes, William, we shall both have to work, for you know I have nothing now to depend upon but my own labour. My money is all gone—the wealth that I had hoarded up for my son has passed from my hands, and when I have paid for our humble cottage I shall have hardly a shilling that I can call my own. I would not have subjected you to this could I have helped it, but you would not certainly wish to remain in the city where your father had suffered such disgrace."

"No, no, dear father, I would not have seen you go alone, but still it's hard to think of this—to think of labour, of common drudgery. But tell me, father, why have we suffered such disgrace? Why were you thrown into gaol?"

The old man gazed into his son's face, and there was a cloud upon his brow, but he spoke not.

"Father," continued the boy, "you are not surely guilty of any crime?"

"Crime!" slowly repeated the old man, while a shudder passed over his frame. "William, ask me not that question again. If you love your father, let him keep the secret that can do you no good now in its revelation. The time may come when you shall know, but until that time ask me not for it. I love you, William, and I will work for you—I will earn by the sweat of my brow the bread that you need."

"Father," exclaimed the affectionate youth, "forgive me if I have pained you. I know that you have not been guilty—I know that your heart is too noble; but you shall not work alone. You have sustained me in all my wants and extravagances thus far, and now that a cloud has settled over your way, I will help you on. We will work together."

As the boy spoke he threw his arms around his father's neck. At that moment, all toil-worn and weary as he was, exiled from the sumptuous home of his childhood in poverty and hardship, the youth felt a thrill of pleasure that had never before found a home in his bosom. It was the first effort of his heart for the welfare of another. The father gazed for a moment into the beaming face of his child, and murmuring, "God bless thee, William," he turned away to stop the flood that had started forth from his eyes.

When the travellers started on their way again they walked with a firmer tread. The father had experienced a new pride in his son, and the son had found a new source of pleasure in his own bosom. Frequently they stopped to rest upon the roadside during the afternoon, and while yet the sun wanted an hour of setting the old man pointed forward to where a small white cottage peeped out from among the still leafless trees, exclaiming, as he did so:

"There, my son, is the end of our journey. That cottage is to be our future home, and may God grant us peace in our quiet retreat."

Together the father and son pushed on, and ere long they stood beneath the humble porch. At the door they were received by a middle-aged man, who at once recognized the elder of the new comers, and who ushered them into the dwelling.

"So you've arrived at last, Mr. Hanfield," observed the man who had been in waiting at the cottage, as he placed two chairs near the fire.

"Yes, yes, Abel," returned the old man, "and rather a hard time we've had of it. The roads are not in a very inviting condition for pedestrians."

"No, sir, that they ain't; but you've got a comfortable place here, and I believe everything is just as you wished it."

After a short rest and a bit of refreshment, Mr. Hanfield accompanied Abel over the house and outbuildings. Everything was indeed in order for a snug, comfortable farm-house. The furniture was in good order, and of a neat, substantial kind; the barn was tight and warm, and contained a yoke of fine oxen, cows, sheep, and poultry; the farming utensils were mostly new and well-assorted, while all the other appurtenances were in keeping.

"William," said Mr. Hanfield, after the candles had been lighted, "one month ago the only sum of money that I held in my possession was two thousand pounds, and even that might have been paid to my creditors, but I still had a son, and I determined that, for his sake, I would hold on to it. Into the hands of a man whom I could trust I placed that sum, and got him to purchase this cottage and farm in his own name, so that creditors could never touch it. I have some fifty pounds yet, in money, which will supply us with the necessities of life till we can get on our crops. Now you know how we stand. It will come hard upon us at first, but, my son, let us not be ashamed of honest labour. Mrs. Abel will be here in the morning to take charge of our household, while her husband will render us such assistance as we need on the farm. I might have obtained you a petty clerkship in the city, where you could, through hardship and toil, have worked your way to a better situation; but there was one circumstance that utterly forbade a son of mine remaining in the city. And now, my son, if you would make his last days happy—promise me that you will try to be contented here. You are the youngest and only living of five sons; let the last one, at least, be the stay of my old age."

"Father," returned the youth, as he arose from his seat and approached the old man, "I will confess that to the present time I have given you but little signs of a desire, or even a willingness, to assist you, but you know not my heart if you think I can shrink from my duty now that adversity has come upon you. Ask me no promises, but let my future course speak for itself."

Mr. Hanfield was utterly astonished at this trait in his son's character. It was more than he had dared to hope for, and the ardent, thankful impulses with which he pressed the boy to his bosom told how deeply he appreciated it.

At the end of a week, Mr. Hanfield and his son had become quite domesticated, though we may expect that the latter had often felt lonesome and homesick. He missed the society of his city playmates, and he also missed the delicacies of the city markets, but his resolution was not yet to be broken.

At the end of a fortnight, Mr. Hanfield was greeted by a sight that made him still more thankful. An unknown friend had forwarded to him his extensive library—that evening William experienced another new sensation. For the first time in his life he looked upon his father's library as a source of pleasure and profit, and a grateful tear stole down the old man's cheek, as he saw his son eagerly poring over the pages of a book.

Spring had spread the foliage once more upon the trees, and lifted the green blades from the earth; summer had brought forth the fruits and the loaded stalks, and autumn had shed its ripening colour of gold upon the bending grain in the fields. Merrily sounded the song of the reaper as he went forth to his task, and the yellow corn seemed to wave him a welcome as he came to gather it.

See that sturdy youth as he bends the grain to his sickle and gathers the stalks within his arms. You would hardly recognize in that stalwart boy

with the rich flood of health coursing along his veins, and the tinge of peace and content upon his sturdy face, the pale, debilitated lad whom we first saw seated upon the stone by the roadside.

With the songs of the happy birds, he arose from his bed and went to his daily task; his wholesome food was relished by a keen appetite, and his spare time, of which he had as much as he chose to take, was spent in reading and in wandering over the hills. His heart, which had formerly been shut up within the confines of dissolute companionship, had begun to swell with new and nobler impulses; and his mind, which had once been only given to folly and dissipation, was gradually becoming the storehouse of intellectual wealth.

In this manner four years passed away. William Hanfield had grown to be a man in stature, and he had grown to be a man in intellectual attainments.

William's peculiar attainments may be accounted for on very natural principles. His station by birth gave him a sort of pre-eminence in the scale of ambition, feelings and desires, and though that same station would have perverted and vitiated these desires, yet when they were transplanted to a healthy, genial soil, they became the incentives to noble action. Then the extensive library of his father, added to that father's teaching, rendered his education sure and perfect.

One evening, while William sat by the window reading, just as the last rays of the summer's sun were gliding the landscape, Mr. Hanfield entered the room with an open letter in his hand, and took a seat near his son. There was a most happy look upon his face, and from his still bright eye there shone beams of the utmost satisfaction.

"William," he said, "do you remember Mr. Archibald Willis?"

"Indeed, I do, father, for you remember his son and daughter used to be my playmates."

"Well, William, I have just received a letter from Mr. Willis, and he is coming to spend a month or two with us in our country home, and he brings Frank and Caroline with him. Mr. Willis has just retired from business, and in the autumn his son Frank will take the establishment himself, but in the meantime they want a little recreation."

For the first time during years William Hanfield felt a pang shoot through his heart. Frank Willis was just his own age, and when last they met their worldly circumstances were equal. Now Frank was to be the rich merchant, and he—

"What am I?" thought the young man, as he came to this point of comparison between his old playfellow and himself. "I am a man—an honest, bright, intelligent, respected man!"

The pang was gone, and William Hanfield was happy. His father had watched with a searching eye the workings of his son's countenance, and he knew at a moment that the first enemy had been overcome.

At length a travelling carriage rolled up to the cottage door, and the inmates alighted. Mr. Hanfield stepped quickly forward, and grasped his old friend by the hand. In that meeting there was nothing of constraint; there was nothing of affectation. Old and young friends had met once more, and even when William greeted Frank and his sister, there was so much frankness, so much open-hearted goodness and grace in his manner, that they felt at once in the sphere of home.

That evening the conversation was lively and entertaining. Old scenes were referred to, and present ones were discussed—business, pleasure, politics, and all the phases that grow out of the great social and moral world, came in for a share of remark. William was animated and happy, his father was proud, and their guests were perfectly at home and full of enjoyment.

A week slipped by on golden wings. The two old men walked and talked, sat and talked, and rode and talked, while the young people found a thousand means of recreation and amusement.

It was towards the close of the day. Frank had gone down to the river with his fishing-rod, and William and Caroline were walking along by the hedges gathering wild flowers and berries. The air that swept mildly o'er the verdant earth was loaded with the sweetest fragrance, while the heat of the day was just giving way to the gentle, welcome coolness of evening.

"Oh, Mr. Hanfield," said Caroline, as she felt the sweet breeze playing in her ringlets, "how happy you must be in such a place as this. I should never like to gaze upon the loveliness which nature has spread around your rural home."

"Ah, Miss Willis," returned William, with a happy smile, "I fear you would soon tire of our winters. While all is blooming with nature's loveliness, the country is indeed beautiful and inviting; but when the cold storms and drifting snows of winter shut you up from the world, then you would be longing for the associations and friendships of the town."

"Indeed, Mr. Hanfield, I should long for no such thing, for I certainly believe that the friendships of the country are the purest and most disinterested; besides, everything here is so free, so open and frank; while in the town, especially in the circle in which we move, friendships are so formal and cold, seeming to be rather a sort of business transaction than a social interchange of feeling."

"Then you have been in the country before?"

"Oh, no; this is my first essay in country life."

"And still you talk of country friendship, like one who had experienced much of it."

William gazed into his companion's face as he spoke, and there was a smile upon his features; but it was a serious smile, nevertheless, and one which bespoke but little lightness of feeling.

"Have I not experienced much of it?" answered Caroline, as she returned the young man's gaze with a sort of grateful look. "Indeed, yourself and father have proved most kind, and I should certainly do my own convictions injustice were I to underrate your friendship."

For several moments the two walked on in silence. Beneath a sort of natural arbour, formed by interwoven vines of raspberry and sweet brier, William espied a large white rose. He reached forth and plucked it from its parent stem, and with a trembling hand he placed it within the bouquet his companion held. Caroline thanked him with a happy, grateful smile, and in a moment more William said:

"Miss Willis—" "My name is Caroline," interrupted the fair girl.

"Well, I would rather call you by that name," returned William. "But do you know that sometimes I almost wish that you had never come to visit us?"

"Wish that I had never come!" repeated Caroline, looking into her companion's face with a startled expression.

William returned the look with one of mingled fear and admiration, and in a soft tone he said:

"Caroline, once there was a Roman youth, who chanced to fall under the displeasure of his monarch, and he was thrown into a deep, dark dungeon. For long years he remained thus, shut out from daylight, and he had become so used to the utter darkness of his cell that he almost began to forget that life had other pleasures than those he enjoyed in the companionship of his domesticated mouse and spider. At length the monarch died, and the poor youth—now a premature old man—was allowed the pleasures of daylight. The bright sun sent its golden beams into his new prison house, the birds came and sat upon the sill of his grated window and chirped their merry song, and once more his heart drank in the blessings of God's munificence. But, alas! at the end of one short month the prisoner was thrown back into his former dungeon of eternal midnight. His little dumb companions manifested their attachment, but they no longer afforded him a source of pleasure. He had seen the sun, he had basked in its glorious light—he had heard the hum of the social world, and his soul had drunk in the delights of nature's sweet face. The short hours of pleasure had left his heart too tender for the shock, and it broke. That one month of sunshine and gladness overcame for ever all power to endure the endless darkness longer, and it proved his minister of death."

As William ceased speaking the gentle girl looked up in his face. Her lips trembled, and her bosom heaved with a strong emotion. She turned away her head—a teardrop started forth from her dark lashes and fell upon the fluttering leaves of the white rose. William saw it. He saw the crimson tide rush to her white neck and temples, and he knew that he was understood.

The sun had gone to its rest, the dew began to hang in pearly drops upon the grass, and the two companions hastened towards home; but ere they reached it their hearts had beat with a new and holy feeling. Their lips had uttered no confession, but in a language stronger than words, they had imparted to each other the knowledge of a mutual love.

"Caroline," said Mr. Willis to his daughter, after their evening meal, and while they were alone in the sitting-room, "I have something to say to you, and if you would secure your own happiness, answer me frankly."

Caroline looked up into her father's face with an inquiring, surprised look.

"My child, you have been sad this morning."

"Sad, father?"

"Yes; I have seen tears gathering in your eyes—I have seen your bosom heave, and I have heard you sigh."

Mr. Willis took his daughter by the hand, and gazing affectionately into her face, he continued:

"Now tell me, Caroline, has not William Hanfield told you something that has caused all this?"

"Indeed, father, William has told me nothing but—but—"

"You may trust your father."

Mr. Willis spoke in a tone so mild and so tender—so full of fond and earnest sympathy, that the fair girl's heart was opened, and with a beaming look she continued:

"He has said but little to me, father, but yet I feel that he loves me."

"And you, Caroline, were you displeased at the knowledge?"

"Displeased, father?" returned Caroline, somewhat puzzled by the strange expression that rested upon her father's features.

"Then you were not displeased."

"O, father, why should I be displeased to receive the love of one so noble and good. No, I rather—I blush not to own it—gave him mine ere I knew that I possessed his."

"Then you would not hesitate to take for your husband this poor youth?"

"He's rich, father—rich!" exclaimed Caroline, while a look of pride flashed o'er her handsome face. "His heart, his soul, his mind, are stored with a wealth that no turn in the fickle wheel of fortune can take from him. His is a wealth that comes from nature and from nature's God, and it constitutes its possessor one of earth's true noblemen."

There was a proud look upon the old man's face as his daughter spoke, and rising from his seat, he said:

"Caroline, you have spoken truly. William Hanfield is a noble youth. For miles around he is honoured and beloved by all who know him, and you shall be his wife."

"Father!"

"You shall be his wife."

"But William—he—he has not—"

"William loves you, and that is enough," interrupted the happy old man. "There, say no more. Just leave the matter to me."

As Mr. Willis spoke, he left the room and joined his host in the garden, while Caroline suffered herself to be lost in a whirl of emotions in which hope and love stood foremost.

The next morning the two old men talked long and earnestly together, and when Mr. Hanfield sought his own room, there was a curious expression of gladness upon his brow. Mr. Willis sought William, and informed him that his father wished to see him.

The young man had seen the movements of the morning, and there was an expression of the deepest concern and anxiety upon his countenance as he entered the presence of his father.

The old man motioned him to a seat, and then, drawing his own chair towards that of his son, he said:

"William, I wish you to throw off all reserve—speak to me as though there was no pledge between us, and let your words bear to me the sentiments and feelings of the heart. Tell me, my son, what are your desires and aspirations for the future?"

"I know not that I understand you exactly," returned the youth, as he looked anxiously at his father. "But whatever may be the hopes, or, rather, the air-castles that sometimes get possession of my brain, I assure you they lead not my heart away from its true goal. My desires, my aspirations for the future are such as may make me an honourable, a respected man."

"Ah, heaven bless you, my son, for that noble sentiment. But, William, has not the past week opened to your mind a path in which you would like to set out for the journey of life?—a path which you never thought of before?"

The rich blood mounted to the brow of the youth as his parent asked this question, and for the moment he comprehended not the full meaning of the remark; but his own feelings, however, told him something of what he might answer.

"I know not exactly to what you allude," he said, "but still I may answer your question. I have received new feelings, new impulses. Within the week a star of sweet, beaming light has burst upon my way, and my soul has been bathed in its effulgence; but I know not that it has opened any new path for the future, for I may never possess it."

"William, you allude to Caroline Willis."

"You have guessed a secret which I had thought was locked up in my own bosom," replied William, while a shadow of something like pain passed over his countenance.

"And did you think, my son, that I saw not the emotions that were rife in your bosom? Do you think that Mr. Willis knew not the result of your intimacy with his daughter? Ah, William, never was there so treacherous a secret as love. Your every movement, your every look and action, have been toll-tales against you."

"My father," answered the youth, with a frank open look, "you have judged me rightly. I do love Caro-

line, but I have not told her of it—I have not forced my love upon her. There are some things—some expressions, that the heart may not keep—such I may have breathed forth in her presence, but I have not spoken to her of a love that is hopeless. She will soon return to her home, and I shall then be left alone; no, not alone—my father will be with me, and I shall have my books and my pen. But, ah, I could wish now that my lot were different. I could wish that I had wealth, not that wealth in itself would increase my enjoyment, but it would enable me to use my talents to more advantage for my fellow-men, and it would place me where I could ask for the hand of her I love. The time was when I looked upon money as a mere source of sensual gratification, but now I would only ask it that I might be the better able to spread peace and happiness about me."

For a full minute Mr. Hanfield gazed into his son's face. There was a powerful emotion at work within him, and a gushing fountain of pride sent its impulses sweeping over his face.

The tears gathered thick and fast in his eyes, and he turned away to the window; then he arose from his chair and paced several times up and down the apartment. At length he stopped and grasped the youth by the hand, and in a joyous, swelling tone, he said:

"William, my son, the ordeal is passed! O, with what earnest, prayerful hopes have I looked forward to this moment. Now, my noble, my beloved, generous boy, you shall know your Father's Secret!"

William started from his chair, and gazed earnestly into his father's face.

"Be seated, my son," said the old man, as soon as he could compose himself, "and you shall hear my tale."

The father and son were once more seated, and the old man commenced.

"You are aware, William, that you are the youngest of five sons. When I commenced business I was fortunate. Money seemed to drop into my coffers, let me turn my hand which way I would; but with all my riches I was far from happy. Among my children there seemed to be a strange fatality, for as soon as they began to associate in the world a life of dissipation was sure to follow. I did everything that a father's love could suggest—I offered them good situations—I offered to do anything that lay in my power, if they would leave their evil ways; but, alas! my wealth ruined them, not that wealth is calculated to lead to evil, but in the case of my children it became a means of sustaining them in their vicious course. It seemed to be constitutional, and neither threats nor persuasions could eradicate or better it. One after another they dropped off, and I followed them to their graves. I must say that I almost felt thankful when they were thus relieved of their sufferings. Within a week of the death of the last your mother fell a victim to a disease that had preyed upon her for years, and you were all that was left to me. But my heart was nigh breaking when I found that you, too, were going in the same road. The bloom of your cheek was gone, your constitution was fading away, and the seeds of disease were fast being sown in your system."

A cold shudder ran through William's frame, and he wiped the perspiration from his brow. His father continued:

"I saw that the most decisive measures must be adopted, and that, too, at once, for my heart clung to you as the only thing that was left for me to live for. My mind was soon made up. I saw the rocks upon which your brothers had foundered, and I determined they should no longer lay in your path. I allowed my notes to be protested, and it soon became noised abroad that I had failed. The only man to whom I confided my secret was Mr. Willis, and I so successfully worked my plans that I had paid up all my liabilities, with the exception of such as the sale of my furniture and house would meet. The selling off of everything I possessed gave the appearance to you of utter ruin on my part, and when, at my own connivance, I was thrown into jail, I found that love for your father overcame all other feelings in your bosom. Then, William, I knew that I had found a remedy for your disease. I found that the moment your father was ruined your better nature prevailed; but I was determined that the cure should be perfect, and you well know what has followed since that time. Oh, my son, you know not what a rich and boundless mine of wealth was opened to my soul when we sat upon that stone by the roadside, and you first opened to me the real goodness of your heart. Now say, my son, have we not been happy in our exile?"

William Hanfield spoke not, but dropping upon his knees, he bent his head forward into his father's lap, and burst into tears.

"Oh, my father, my father!" he at length murmured, as he arose to his feet, "all this you have suffered for me!"

"No, no, my son," cried the old man; "I have not

suffered. The happiest years of my life have been spent in our rural home, and you, you, my boy, have been the very sunshine of my existence. I could almost wish that we might pass the remainder of our days here, but other and more exalted duties are open before you. The daughter of my old friend loves you—"

"Caroline loves me!" gasped the youth, seeming to doubt his ears.

"Yes, my son," replied the old man, with a happy smile. "She told her father so last night."

"And he—her father—"

"Was never more happy in his life than when he told his daughter that she should be your wife."

"O, this is too much—my poor heart will burst with its own joy," uttered the youth, as he caught his father's arm for support. Then his heart grew more calm, his feelings turned into a holier channel, and raising his clasped hands towards heaven he poured forth his soul's thanksgiving.

"Come, come, my son," at length said the old man, after he had himself returned his thanks, "let us now seek our guests. Our ordeal is passed, and we will ever remember with pleasure the sweet moments that have been ours during our exile. But now new scenes await us. My wealth is unharmed. I have made arrangements for you to enter into partnership with Frank, and I can give you twenty thousand pounds on the day of your entry into business, for I am well assured that in your hands it will be used for the best purposes."

The bright sunbeams danced joyously o'er the earth—the sweet scented breeze murmured its song of thanksgiving among the flowers and the loaded vines, and the birds sounded forth their wildest notes of joy, but happier than all were the hearts that beat beneath the humble roof of the exiles! But they are exiles no longer. Peace and joy have opened wide their gates, and they have entered into those realms where the pure in heart make a heaven upon earth, even in the busy, moving, labouring world.

The cottage of the exiles still stands, and more than once has William and Caroline re-visited the scene of their first love—a love which grows stronger with years, and which sheds a halo of blessedness around all who come within the sphere of their influence.

A. C. B.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.,

Author of "The Jewit," "The Pretense," "Minnegrey," &c.

CHAPTER CXLIII.

When passions glow, the heart, like heated steel,
Takes each impression, and is worked at pleasure.

Young.

"It is not the time," whispered her husband.
"Thanks, Charles," said the widow, rising, to depart; "you have achieved all that I could wish; and now, my dear, true friends, let me entreat of you to speak upon this subject no more—for many reasons it is a painful one to me. I am bound both to him and his sister by the chain of obligation. Alas! it is my misfortune," she added, "to cause the unhappiness of both!"

"You speak in a tone which sounds like self-reproach, Margaret," observed Mrs. Briancourt.

Her ladyship coloured slightly—it was the second time she had done so when the name of Frank Hazleton had been mentioned.

"Forgive me!" continued Mary, fearing she had wounded her; "it was a foolish speech—what can you possibly have to reproach yourself with? I only pray that my breast may always bear a heart as pure as yours!"

"She will never love him!" said Charles, as soon as Lady Sinclair had left the room, "and hang me," he added, "if it is not a thousand pities—for the gallant fellow deserves her! Are you not of my opinion?" he added.

"Which opinion?" asked his wife; "for you expressed two."

"Both, then!" replied her husband.

Mary hesitated before she gave her answer.

"That he deserves her," she replied, at last. "Yes! but that she will never love him I do not feel quite so assured!"

"Is it possible?—do you believe that—has Margaret confessed?"

"She has confessed nothing—never hinted a word!" interrupted the lady; "so do not misunderstand me! Had she done so, even from you, Charles, her confidence would have been sacred! You ask me for my opinion merely—and I am giving it: if ever Margaret loves again, Frank Hazleton will be the object of her choice!"

"But will she ever love again?" demanded her husband.

"Ay, there's the doubt!" said Mary; "for her heart has been already severely tried."

Scarcely had Dick and the son of the long-persecuted Alice quitted London, when Captain Vernon, who had been telegraphed for by the Admiralty, arrived in town: his interview with the First Lord despatched, he hastened into Lombard Street, fully expecting to meet both his sons, as he called them.

"Gone!" he exclaimed, repeating the word of Mr. Brindley. "You do not mean to say that he has left with the intention of seeing his father?"

"I fear that he has," replied the old man, anxiously. "I begged him to await your arrival—but he scarcely listened to me. The knowledge of his mother's wrong has driven him almost mad. But you do not think," he added, "that any danger will befall them?"

"No—no!" said the gallant sailor, mastering his emotion with a violent effort—for he feared to alarm the old man; "but I will follow them instantly."

"Yes—yes!" observed the goldsmith, nervously; "we will both follow. I expect my lawyer, Mr. Falgrave, every instant, and in the morning we can start together."

Captain Vernon resolved to proceed alone; he knew that the godfather of his ward was no longer capable of enduring the fatigue of such a journey as he was about to take. In his alarm, he considered it a race with death—for he judged that the earl would hesitate at no means, however desperate, to avoid the double punishment of infamy and poverty which awaited him. "Send and order me a chaise-and-four directly!" he whispered to Goliah.

"Stay!" said Mr. Brindley, as his partner was about to leave the room; "I see it all! you apprehend danger to my poor boy from his unnatural father?"

"No—no! Dick is with him!"

"You cannot deceive me," continued the old man; "affection is sharp-sighted. Go!" he added; "lose not an hour—a moment—take Goliah and the lawyer with you! Spare not for money—pave the very roads with gold—but bring back my boy."

So saying, he opened his cabinet, and taking from one of the drawers a thick roll of notes, thrust them into the hands of Captain Vernon, who would have counted them in his presence had not the goldsmith prevented him.

In less than an hour he started on his journey, in the hope of overtaking his boys—Goliah and Mr. Falgrave, the lawyer, accompanying him; the latter explained to him the discovery of the will of the old miser, Nicholas Arden, and the hold which it gave the viscount over his unnatural father.

"Does the earl know it?" anxiously inquired the father of Annie.

"Not yet!"

"Thank heaven," replied the captain, "the villain has one incentive less to commit a crime."

We left Digby Viscount Moretown—for so for the future the young lieutenant must be designated—posting towards the north, accompanied by his earliest friend, Dick Vernon. So suddenly had he taken both his resolution and departure, that he had neither calculated the expense nor distance of the journey before him.

The consequence was, that by the time they arrived at Durham, the purses of both the young men were exhausted; and the postmaster, finding that they were unable to pay the last stage, refused to supply them with fresh horses. Poor Digby was in despair, and his companion unable to console him.

"Was ever anything so unfortunate?" he said; "to be thus wind-bound on the cruise! What shall we do?"

"Proceed!" exclaimed Digby, in a tone of anguish. "I cannot pause—cannot rest here! My heart is consuming in its bitterness! I have a mother, Dick, from whom I was torn in infancy—a suffering angel who has endured all for my sake—cruelly, persecution, insult, madness! I fancy I hear her voice calling to me for protection—see her in her lone chamber, the victim of —. It is horrible! I shall go mad—mad," he repeated, "at this delay."

"Were it not better to write at once to Mr. Brindley?" suggested Dick; "you cannot proceed on foot!"

"Were I lame, I would crawl on—blind, I would inquire the way."

"But we are almost penniless," urged his friend.

"I will beg for food, then," replied the distracted son, "if nature fails me; but it cannot fail me. You do not know how strong are my energies," he added, "when such motives urge me on! I feel that I could wrestle with Death in his most hideous form, and vanquish him!"

His companion began to feel seriously alarmed; the eyes of the speaker were bloodshot, and he looked wild and haggard.

"Dear—dear Fred!" he whispered, calling him by the old familiar name; give me a few minutes to reflect—be patient!"

"Patient, Dick!" repeated the viscount. "Oh, how easy it is to preach patience when the heart is at rest! Patient! and you know my suffering mother's wrongs—my unnatural father's crimes—when—forgive me!" he added, dashing aside a tear, "my misery not only unman me, but makes me unjust to you—my friend, my brother! Judge, then, of its intensity!"

"Never mind me!" exclaimed the young sailor, grasping him warmly by the hand; "I know your heart is all right, and take no heed of words! 'Sdeath! what a fool I have been all this while!" he continued, struck by a sudden thought.

"What mean you?" demanded his lordship.

"We can proceed!"

"Bless you, Dick—oh, bless you for that word!"

"I can procure money—enough, at least, to take us by the way to Fulton—which, I see by the map, is only a mile or two distant from the abbey! Come with me to the inn—take some refreshment—if it is only a glass of wine!" said the speaker, coaxingly; "for my sake—for Annie's sake—for the sake of all who love you!"

They entered the hotel, and calling for a private room, desired the waiter to send the landlord to them.

"At what hour does the mail pass?" inquired Dick Vernon.

"Which way, sir—up or down?"

"Down."

"About ten," replied the innkeeper. Digby drew out his watch to ascertain the hour. It was only three: consequently they would have seven to wait. He groaned with impatience.

"Let us have dinner," said his companion, "as quickly as possible."

The man hesitated: he knew that they were without money.

"Oh, you need not fear for your bill!" observed the speaker in a scornful tone; it is true that my companion and myself have exhausted our purses—having left London at a moment's notice, on most pressing business—but we can satisfy your demands."

"How?" inquired the prudent landlord.

The lieutenant drew forth his watch—which, like Digby's, was a valuable chronometer—Mr. Brindley's gift—and placed it on the table.

"And if that will not content you," observed his friend, following his example, "there is mine."

"Not yours, my dear lord!" exclaimed Dick, for the first time addressing the speaker by his title; "mine will be sufficient!"

The innkeeper heard the word, and began to doubt whether he had not formed a wrong estimate of his guests, whom at first he looked upon as two adventurers. Still, as we said before, he was a prudent man, and determined ere he advanced a shilling upon the proffered securities, to ascertain their real value.

"Dinner shall be ordered immediately, gentlemen!" he observed, addressing them in a more respectful tone; "and if you have no objection, I will send for my son—he is a jeweller and silversmith in the town: he understands these things, and will purchase them at their just value."

"They are not to be sold," replied young Vernon; "not on account of their value, but because they are the gift of a dear and generous friend. Advance us sufficient to reach our journey's end," he added, "and that is all we require."

The man looked disappointed.

"They shall be nobly redeemed," continued the speaker; "even your avarice shall be satisfied—for we have you to name your own terms."

The landlord left the room, which the viscount continued to pace with restless impatience. Never had the minutes appeared so long—and yet he might have counted them by the beating of his heart, or the throbbing of his overhaunted brain.

For some time his friend watched him in silence, till he could endure it no longer. Starting from his seat, he advanced to his side, and drew the arm of the agitated youth within his.

"Be calm," he said; "this fever of the heart will destroy you. Remember how many lives depend on yours—Mr. Brindley's—for the kind old man would never survive your loss!"

"True—true!"

"Annie's!" continued the speaker.

"Annie!" exclaimed her lover; "dear, sweet girl! God bless her!"

"And the mother's you love," added Dick; "whose heart has been poured out to you in her letter—yearned over you with maternal tenderness—prayed for you, and blessed you through long years of suffering and sorrow."

"I will be patient!" replied his friend; "and yet when I reflect that the mind of the being you speak of has been destroyed by the heartless tyrant who should possess her—by the man who should—"

"There, again!" interrupted Dick; "if you are thus impetuous with me, can you wonder that I tremble for you when you shall confront him?"

"Fear not!" said the viscount; "bad as he is, I shall

never forget that he is my father! I will be calm as the accusing angel's voice when it sums up the record of his crimes—demand to see my mother!"

"Should he refuse you?" suggested his friend.

"Refuse!" repeated the young man; "he will not dare—for I possess the means to beggar him—to strip him of the wealth for which he has sinned so deeply—to trample on his pride as he has trampled on her heart! And I will do it," he added, sternly, "if, deaf to justice and the cry of nature, he should deny my right to watch over and protect the only parent my heart can now acknowledge!"

Further conversation was interrupted by the appearance of the landlord, who came to announce that his son was perfectly satisfied with the value of the security, and would advance them a sufficient sum to enable them to reach their destination; in conclusion, he counted down ten sovereigns upon the table—it was about the tenth part of the real value of the watches.

"It is sufficient!" observed the viscount, with a bitter smile; "and now, sir, do not let us be intruded upon unnecessarily, and see that places are secured for us by the mail."

The fellow promised, and hastened from the room—for he heard the cracking of the postillions' whips, and knew that fresh guests or travellers had arrived at the post-house.

He was not deceived: a carriage-and-four, with two servants in the rumble, dashed up to the front of the hotel; the horses, postillions, and footmen were green and white ribbons—the colours of the government candidates whom the Earl of Moretown had promised to return for the ensuing Parliament.

"Will you alight, ma'mselle?" inquired the landlord, bowing very low to the elder of the two ladies who occupied the back seat.

"Let me have horses instantly!" exclaimed Athalie, impatiently—for it was no other than the governess, who had been canvassing in the neighbourhood. "I shall scarcely reach the abbey by dinner time. Julie, my love," she added, addressing her companion, "we must do the fifty miles in four hours—not a minute more!"

The party thus addressed was her daughter, who passed in the world as her niece.

Attracted by the bustle and the gay colours of the postillions, Dick and his companion advanced to the window, and remained there while the horses were being put to.

The eyes of Digby and Athalie met, and, by an unaccountable species of fascination, neither could withdraw their gaze from the countenance of the other. Although years had elapsed since the child of Alice had been stolen from her care, the governess had never forgotten his features: they had been engraved by hatred upon the tablets of her memory, and his likeness to his mother aided it.

"Who is that gentleman?" she demanded of the landlord.

"Can't tell, ma'mselle," replied the man. "He came here in a chaise-and-four, with a young fellow about his own age. It seems they are on their way to Fulton."

"Fulton!" repeated the female fiend, with a shudder.

"I thought," continued the innkeeper, "that you knew them. I took them to be visitors on their way to the abbey."

"No."

"One addressed the other as 'my lord.'"

A cold and fend-like smile curled the lips of the Frenchwoman, as she listened to this confirmation of her suspicions: the being whom, next to Alice, she most hated and feared, was before her.

"And how does this lord," she inquired, in a satirical tone, "who travels without money, intend to proceed?"

"By mail, ma'mselle!"

"And how far?"

"As I told you, to Fulton!" replied the man. "I have agreed to lend them a few pounds; but if you think it would be displeasing to his lordship—"

"Not in the least!" interrupted the governess, with affected surprise; "how can it possibly concern the earl? All I request of you is, not to answer any inquiries they may make respecting me."

"Certainly not, ma'mselle."

"And now," said the lady, "tell the post-boys they shall have a guinea a stage, provided they do the thirteen miles within the hour. It is now a quarter to four," she added, looking at her watch, "and I must positively reach home by eight."

"I cannot imagine," exclaimed Digby, turning to his companion as the carriage drove off, "where I have seen that lady: and her face is familiar to me—it haunts me like a dream of my childhood."

"She seemed equally struck with you," observed Dick. "Even whilst speaking with the landlord, her eyes remained rivetted upon your features."

"I wish I could remember!" muttered the viscount,

musingly; "I feel a singular anxiety to know her name."

"Easily gratified, I should imagine," replied his friend, at the same time ringing the bell for the waiter.

The man had received his cue, and at first could afford no information. Dick, however, was not to be deceived by his affected ignorance upon the subject. Showing the fellow a crown-piece, he repeated his question.

"You will not let master know I told you, sir?" whispered the man, with a grin.

"Certainly not."

"And the crown-piece?"

"Is here," said the gentleman, dropping it into his hand.

"Why, then, sir, it is ma'mselle, as they call her—a Frenchwoman, who lives with the Earl of Moretown, near Fulton. His wife is mad, they say, and she—"

"Enough, my good fellow!" hastily interrupted Dick, who feared the effect which his information might produce upon his companion; "you can leave the room!"

"I have seen her!" exclaimed Digby, in a tone of mingled contempt and hatred; "the destroyer of my mother's happiness—the fiend who would have degraded and corrupted my youth, in order to render my manhood infamous, had not Providence interposed to snatch me from her hands. No wonder that I shuddered when I first beheld her: an instinctive loathing seemed to warn me of her presence."

"I fear," observed his friend, "that she recognized you."

"Let her!" answered the young man, proudly. "The serpent's fangs are almost drawn; but we will speak of her no more—her name is hateful to me!"

Although the speaker made no further allusion to the meeting with the bitter enemy of his mother, it was evident to his companion that the encounter had produced a painful impression upon his mind. He remained moody and silent; more than once during the repast he started from the table and paced the room impatiently.

"Would to heaven," thought Dick, as he gazed upon him, "that my father or Mr. Brindley were here!"

The wish was very natural—for, everything considered, the position of the two travellers was anything but an enviable one.

To the great relief of both, the mail arrived at last, and the young men were enabled to continue their journey.

"Do not fear for me!" whispered the viscount to his friend; "the storm has passed—I am calm now—calm as my resolution—strong as the justice of my cause!"

Dick pressed his hand. From what he had learned of the Earl of Moretown's character, he felt that the attempt of Digby to see his mother might prove a dangerous one; and, happen what might, he resolved not to lose sight of him for a single instant.

The only passenger besides themselves was a tall gentlemanly young man, to whom the travellers would have paid but little attention had it not been for a question which he put to the guard of the mail, the first stage they changed horses.

"How far is the lodge of Moretown Abbey from Fulton?"

"Two miles," was the reply.

"Put me down at it," said the passenger.

"All right, sir!"

And again the four high-bred horses dashed along the road.

Dick reflected: it had been his and his companion's intention to alight at the lodge, too, and proceed at once to the abbey; but, without knowing exactly why, he felt a strong desire to alter the arrangement.

"We will descend at Fulton!" he whispered to his friend.

Digby looked at him with surprise.

"I have my reasons!" continued the speaker; "it is but two miles—we can easily walk it; added to which, it will give you time to collect yourself!"

"As you please!" answered the son of the unfortunate Alice; "but come what will I must be there to-night!"

CHAPTER CXLIV.

We but teach evil instructions—which, being taught, Return to plague the monitor. This even-handed Justice commends the ingredients of the poisoned chalice To our own lips. *Shakepeare.*

WHEN Athalie reached the abbey, instead of dressing to receive the earl and a large party of gentlemen who had been dining with him in the drawing-room, she wrote a few hasty lines to her drape, excusing her absence on the plea of indisposition, and, retreating to her chamber, gave orders to her waiting-woman to refuse admittance even to his lordship. Her next care

was to disguise herself so effectually that, if she encountered any one in the park, they would fail to recognize her.

During the ride home, the abandoned woman had meditated on the danger which threatened—the exposure and shame which hung by a hair suspended over her—and made up her mind by any means to avoid them.

Hate—the undying hatred which she felt towards her victim—added strength to her determination. The idea of her son succeeding to the honours of his father—of his rearing from the earl the Riddle estate—was gall to her, and she decided upon ridding herself of all present and future fear upon the subject.

"Let him come!" she muttered, as she directed her way through the preserves towards the cottage of the keeper, Kelf, who had now become an old man. "He would inherit Moretown Abbey. He shall take possession this very night of all he will ever hold of it—a grave!" she added, bitterly, "a grave! The idiot mother must follow, too!" thought the fiend, as she hastened her steps. "Would that she could feel the blow, and know the hand which struck it! My vengeance will be but half complete without it!"

As our readers may naturally suppose, an artful woman like Athalie had not for so many years ruled the noble dupe, her paramour, without making herself acquainted with many circumstances of his previous life. Like many of her sex who know much, she suspected still more; in other words, she either had, or fancied that she had, the gamekeeper in her power; she imagined that she could trust him—and was not deceived.

Long and whispered, in under-tones, was the conversation which took place between them; at first the old man appeared unwilling to assent to something which the temptress urged. Gradually, however, his scruples, real or affected, gave way, and a compact was sealed between them. When everything was settled, he took down his double-barrelled gun, and carefully charged it with ball.

"You are an excellent marksman," she remarked; "I have heard my lord say so a hundred times."

"I could hit a crown-piece at fifty yards," replied the ruffian.

Athalie smiled; it seemed a guarantee of the success of her infernal project.

"You know the hour?" she whispered.

Kelf nodded.

"And will not permit your nerve to fail you!"

"It will be the first time in my life if it does, ma'mselle!" replied the callous wretch. "If the earl has trusted me—and you know he has—you need not doubt me! Keep your promise touching the reward as faithfully as I shall fulfil mine, and we shall both be satisfied!"

"Doubt me not!" said the woman, boldly; and drawing her shawl closely round her form, she left the lodge, to return to the abbey, and meditate upon the completion of the rest of her scheme of vengeance.

On reaching her room, Fifine informed her that Mademoiselle Julie had been twice to the door of her chamber to inquire for her.

"And what did you say?" inquired her mistress.

"That you slept!"

"Right—quite right. If the dear child returns, say that I am awake, and admit her. This old mansion is so dull and gloomy," she added, looking around her with an involuntary shudder, "that I hate to be left alone in it!"

The maid withdrew, with a scarcely perceptible smile upon her lips, at the affected timidity of the speaker.

The governess threw herself upon an ottoman—for she felt really fatigued with her journey and walk through the park—and, throwing a rich shawl over her feet, arranged herself so as to appear as if she had been sleeping, in the event of a visit either from his lordship or her daughter: not that she permitted her mind to dwell upon them—her thoughts were far otherwise employed, and she remained for awhile plunged in a profound reverie.

"It must be done to-morrow!" she muttered to herself; "I will no longer delay the consummation of the desire which, from the moment I heard of my rival's marriage, haunted me. Surely Attey must be back by then," she added, after a pause; "the lawyer I employed to procure her liberation promised me. Brooks must be sent out of the way on some pretence—I dare not trust her."

We need not say that she alluded to the death of Alice, which she had so long meditated.

"Mother and son!" she continued, pursuing the train of her reflections, half-aloud, "both within a few hours of each other. This is vengeance which outweighs the risk. Risk!" repeated the heartless woman, smiling bitterly at the word; "there is no risk—the means are sure! Enough of the poison yet remains."

She drew from her bosom the *flacon* which Doctor Briard had prepared for her—it was still about a

third full—and contemplated it for some time in silence.

There was a gentle tap at the door of the dressing-room.

"Come in," she said, after concealing the drug of which she had already on one occasion made such fearful use.

We question if even in the most worthless of the human race a being ever yet was found in whose heart every sentiment of affection, every feeling of human love, was utterly extinct. Although she had detested her husband, she dearly loved her child; and it was not the least part of her punishment that she had not only to hide from the world, but from the innocent girl herself, the tie between them—address her by the name of niece when she longed to throw herself into her arms and call her by the endearing name of daughter. She felt proud of her beauty—proud of her accomplishments—and, stranger yet to say, proud of the purity of mind which rendered her own moral deformity more hideous by the contrast.

It was the first time she had prevailed upon the earl to permit Julie to accompany her to the abbey; the invitation had also been extended to Francis Arlain, a young and distinguished barrister, who was paying his addresses to her.

"I am so glad, dear aunt, that you are well enough to receive me," said the fair girl; "I feared from what Fifine told me that you were ill."

"Fatigued love—nothing more."

Julie drew a cushion from the musnud in the centre of the room to the side of the ottoman on which the speaker was reclining, and seated herself close to her. How she would have shuddered and shrunk from her polluting touch, had she known, or even suspected, that the hand which played with her long, silken curls, or rested upon her shoulder, had taken the life of a fellow-creature—and that fellow-creature her own father. Once or twice she looked with innocent confidence in the face of the wretched woman, smiled, opened her lips as if she wished to speak—hesitated, and cast her eyes upon the carpet.

Athalie observed the confusion of her child, and smiled at her artless embarrassment: she felt almost human as she contemplated her; she forgot for an instant the crime she meditated.

"And so, Julie," she said, "you wish to speak with me?"

"Yes."

"You have something to inform me of?"

"Yes—no—that is—nothing of any consequence!"

"Come," continued the governess, "shall I tell it for you? You have received a letter from Francis!"

"Yes dear aunt."

"And he will be here to-morrow, or Thursday, at the latest?"

Julie smiled, and shook her head.

"No! You do not mean that he has already arrived?"

"Not yet!" replied the happy girl.

Athalie raised herself upon her arm, and fixed her eyes anxiously upon her.

"But he soon—very soon—will be here!" added the artless creature.

"Speak!" exclaimed the terror-stricken woman—for a terrible presentiment overwhelmed her; "you know I cannot endure suspense! my nerves are like the leaf of the aspen—the lightest breath will shake them."

It was the first time in her life that Julie had been told the feelings of her relatives were so sensitive; but she stood in too much awe of her to hesitate.

"He will be here to-night!" she said.

"To-night!" repeated the murderess, in a hollow tone.

"By the mail, aunt?" continued the unsuspecting girl; "he will get down at the lodge, pass through the park, and—"

Athalie could endure no more, but, bounding from the ottoman, she rang the bell with violence.

"Send to the lodge instantly!" she exclaimed, to the domestic who answered it. "I expect a visitor—a friend of your master's; receive him as he alights, accompany him to the house—do not quit him for an instant!"

"I fear, ma'mselle," observed the footman, "that it will be too late—the mail by this time must have passed the gate!"

The wretched creature pointed to the time-piece upon one of the marble consoles near her—her agony was too great for her to speak; but the man understood her.

"I am wrong," he said; "it wants four minutes of the hour."

Four minutes, and the lodge was at least a mile from the mansion. Still it was possible, although the chance was a desperate one.

"Hasten to the gate!" she said. "I will reward you if you reach it before he arrives—reward you richly!"

The domestic waited to hear no more, but darted from the room. He was not one of the few servants whom the earl generally left at the abbey, but belonged to the household in London, and knew quite enough of the governess and her gallantries to feel assured that the errand she had sent him on was of importance.

"You are angry with me, aunt?" whispered Julie.

"No—no!"

"And will you be glad to see Francis? I am certain that he did not dream his arrival a day earlier than the one you appointed would displease you."

"What a simple fancy," observed Athalie, conquering her emotion by a violent effort. "Angry! why should I feel angry? And will I be glad to see him? Of course I shall be glad to see him—as glad, Julie, as you can be!"

Her daughter threw her arms around her neck and thanked her with a kiss. The guilty mother dared not return it. She felt that it would have been a mockery, like the one of Judas. In her remorse, she continued to press the face of the innocent girl to her bosom—she dared not let her gaze upon her features—and remained with her eyes fixed upon the hand of the dial.

Three minutes had already passed since the messenger left the dressing-room. Never had time appeared so rapid in his flight before.

Four minutes had elapsed. By this time she knew that the mail had reached the gate. Oh, how she prayed the lodge-keeper might be absent, asleep—anywhere but ready to admit him.

"It will be her death," she thought, "if ought should happen to him. Her young heart is so entwined with his, that the blow which reaches one must strike them both!"

The time-piece struck the hour. The wretched woman listened till her agony became almost insupportable.

"Aunt—dear aunt—you are ill!" exclaimed the unsuspecting girl; "let me ring for assistance."

"No, no—it was but a sudden spasm. I am better now," replied her mother, releasing her from her embrace; "the danger, if any, is past—past!" she repeated, looking at the dial.

"Thank heaven!"

Before Athalie could repeat the words, the report of a gun was heard at a distance in the park. A deep groan escaped her.

There was a second shot. In an instant her whole manner changed. She started to her feet, and a low, hissing laugh issued from her lips. The second shot had re-assured her—the lover of her child was to come alone. The victims she expected would be together.

"You are a fond, foolish girl!" she said; "and make me almost as nervous as yourself. There, I am better, and can kiss you now!" she added; "Good-night, Julie! Dreams—sweet dreams!"

"You forget Francis," observed the maiden, pointing. "Will you retire before you have seen him?"

"No—no! I feel that it would be unkind! The footman will soon return—I will wait up till he arrives."

Half an hour elapsed, and yet no one came. Voices at last were heard in the park, and the sound of a carriage upon the gravel path: it was one of the guests departing.

"I shall begin to think," observed Athalie, "that Francis is but a cold lover! Surely he might have been here by this time—the distance from the lodge is not so very great!"

Again voices were heard on the lawn; but this time they were accompanied by the ringing of the bell and cries for assistance.

"Something has happened—I feel there has!" exclaimed Julie, who began to feel alarmed for her lover's safety.

"Foolish child! What can have happened?"

"The guns we heard?"

"You will often hear them!" said her aunt; "the place is infested with poachers!"

There was a cry of "Murder!" Unable to endure the horrible suspense, the poor girl threw open the window of the boudoir, and calling to a group of gentlemen who were standing together below, entreated them to tell her what had occurred.

"Nothing! Close the window?" was the reply.

Her doubts were soon ended; for Fifine—her features pale with terror rushed into the boudoir.

"Well," said her mistress, coolly, "have you seen a ghost?"

"Worse!"

"Worse!" repeated the fiend; "two ghosts then?"

"Not ghosts, ma'mselle—but the bodies of two men who have been found murdered in the park."

"Foolish woman!" exclaimed the governess, as her daughter fell fainting upon the ottoman; "see what you have done—alarmed her unnecessarily. Doubtless they were the bodies of two poachers."

"Poachers!" repeated the Abigail; "no, ma'mselle—they were no more poachers than I am! One was

drawn in black, with a cloak upon his arm, quite like a gentleman!"

"And the other?" demanded her mistress, coolly.

"In the liver of the earl!"

The countenance of the guilty creature changed, and became almost as pale as that of the fair girl whose happiness she had destroyed for ever.

The cry of "murder" fell with an accusing sound upon the conscience-stricken Athalie.

For the first time during her long career of crime, the calculations of her intriguing, subtle spirit failed her—at the very moment, too, when success appeared most certain.

The omen was terrible—the hand whose shadow for so many years had haunted her was visible to her guilty soul at last.

"Julie, speak to me—a word—a look!" she exclaimed, as she hung over the still inanimate form of her child; "your fears deceive you—it cannot be Francis that is slain—perhaps he is only wounded. There is hope—there must be hope! Run," she addressed the terrified waiting-maid, "and let me know the worst! Suspense is more horrible than certainty!"

The woman left the boudoir, and hastened to the servants' hall, where several of the domestics had just brought the bodies of the murdered men.

One was the lover of Julie. He was dead—quite dead.

The shot had reached his heart at the moment when it beat high with hope and expectation—full of dreams of a happy future.

Poor fellow!

Little did he think when he alighted at the lodge, that death lay crouching in ambush in his path—that his welcome would be the blow of an assassin.

The second body was that of the domestic whom Athalie had sent him. Although wounded to death, he still breathed.

The Earl of Moretown, his brother-in-law, the Duke of Ayrton, and most of the gentlemen who had been dining with him, were in the apartment, gazing with pale faces upon the dead and dying.

"Has assistance been sent for?" demanded his lordship.

James the footman, informed him that a groom had been despatched to Fulten for a surgeon—also to summon the police.

"This is horrible!" observed his grace, who had been acquainted with the murdered man; "I cannot comprehend it! Poor Arlain was a stranger in the country—how could he have provoked such deadly animosity? The servant, too?"

"Poachers!" replied the earl; the place is infested with them.

Sir Thomas Liddle, the Rev. Mark Hathaway, and other of the guests, shook their heads doubtfully.

"Poachers," they observed, "seldom fired, unless in self-defence; and it was evident from the appearance of the bodies, that there had been no struggle. So near the house, too!"

This opinion was confirmed by the arrival of the lodge-keeper with the luggage of the murdered man. He stated that the gentleman had not entered the park more than five minutes before he heard the report of a gun.

"They have been shot with ball!" exclaimed Captain Ker, an old Peninsular officer, who acted as adjutant of the yeomanry which Lord Moretown commanded.

He had examined the wounds, and ascertained the fact.

Still they could not understand why the servant should have been slain with him. This Fido explained by stating that her mistress had sent him to meet Mr. Arlain at the gate, and given him strict orders to accompany the gentleman to the house.

Although there was nothing extraordinary in such an act of attention on the part of Athalie to an expected guest, the earl heard her name in connection with the murder with secret terror. Involuntarily his eyes encountered those of the old footman, James; he hastily withdrew them: too well he understood their expression—a sickening foreboding struck him.

A shriek was heard. The wretched Julie, who had awakened to the full sense of her misery, rushed into the room, followed by her mother. At the sight of the body of her affianced husband, she threw herself frantically upon it, calling on him by a thousand endearing names to look up and bless her with a smile.

"Francis—Francis!" she sobbed, "do you not know my voice—the voice of your poor Julie? How often have you not vowed to me that its sound would break the sleep of death. A word—only one little word—to ease my broken heart!"

"Pray remove her, madam!" said the Duke of Ayrton, addressing the governess. "This scene is terrible even for men to witness—it will destroy her! A blow so cruel, so unexpected."

"Dealt by my own hand," thought Athalie.

And bitterly did the guilty woman accuse fortune—so in her impiety she termed the overruling action of a just Providence—for having marred her well-planned design—converted her intended triumph into confusion to herself, and misery to the only being in the world she ever really loved.

There was something inexpressibly touching in the sorrow, the hopeless misery of Julie, as she sat with the hand of her murdered lover clasped in hers—her tearless eyes fixed upon his pale features.

"He is not dead!" she said, as her wretched parent endeavoured to lead her away; "he only sleeps—he will awaken soon!"

"Julie—my dear, sweet child," urged the governess, at the same time striving to disengage her clasped hand from that of the corpse, "come with me—with one who loves you."

"And did not he love me?" sobbed the mourner.

"He did!" replied the murderess, soothingly. "All who know must love you—all feel for you."

At the sound of her voice, the domestic, whom the attentions of his fellow-servants had succeeded in partially recalling to consciousness, opened his eyes, and riveted them upon the speaker. There was a mute accusation in his glance which made her tremble: he felt that his life, which was fast ebbing from him, had been sacrificed, and that she was the cause.

"Poor fellow!" said the duke; "see—he revives! Would the surgeon were come—his state perhaps is not hopeless."

The Rev. Mark Hathaway suggested that, for fear of his immediate death, his declaration should be taken, a proposal which was at once agreed to.

(To be continued.)

GREEN AND KELLEY.—Richard Green, the champion of Australia, is, we are informed, on his way once more to this country to contend for the championship of the Thames. He has sent £10 to precede him, for a match with H. Kelly, of Putney; and the latter has, we believe, covered the deposit, and expresses confidence in the result.

OUT of twenty-two competitors for the production of a challenge vase of the value of £1,000, to be shot for annually with the regulation rifle by twenty English and twenty Scotch volunteers, at Wimbledon, the design sent by Messrs. Elkington, of Birmingham, has been selected by the committee, composed of Sir Charles L. Eastlake, F.R.A., Mr. D. MacIse, R.A., Mr. Foley, R.A., and Mr. Layard, M.P.

AVERTING DISEASES.

PAIN is a blessing; it is the great life-preserver; it is the sleepless, faithful sentinel which gives prompt warning that harm is being done. Pain is the result of pressure on or against a nerve; that pressure is made by a blood-vessel, for there is no nerve without a blood-vessel in close proximity. In health, each blood-vessel is moderately full; but the very moment disease, or harm, or violence, by blow, or cut, or otherwise, comes to any part of the body, nature becomes alarmed, as it were, and sends more blood there to repair the injury—much more than is usually required; that additional quantity distends the blood-vessels, presses against a nerve, and gives disquiet or actual pain. In these cases this increased quantity of blood is called "inflammation." Again, if a man eats too much, or is constipated, or by some other means makes his blood impure, it becomes thickened thereby, and does not flow through its channels as freely as it should; hence it accumulates, dams up, congests, distending the veins, which in their turn make pressure on some adjoining nerve, and give dull pain, as headache. This congestion in the arteries gives a sharp, pricking pain.

Pain, then, is the result of more blood being determined to the part where that pain is, than naturally belongs to it. The evident alternative is to diminish the quantity of blood, either at the point of ailment or in the body in general. Thus it is that a mustard-plaster applied near a painful spot, by withdrawing the blood to itself, gives instantaneous relief. Opening a vein will do the same thing; and so, but not as expeditiously, will any purgative medicine, because that by all these things, by diminishing the amount of fluid as to the whole body, each particular part is proportionally relieved. On the same principle it is that a "good sweat" is "good" for any pain, and affords more or less relief. Friction does the same, even if it is performed with so soft a thing as the human hand, for any rubbing reddens, that is, attracts blood to the part rubbed, and thus diminishes the pain at the spot where there is too much blood.

1. The instant we become conscious of any unpleasant sensation in the body, eat nothing. 2. Keep warm. 3. Be still.

These are applicable and safe in all cases; sometimes a speedy result is attained if, instead of being quiet, the patient would, by moderate, steady exercise, keep up a gentle perspiration for several hours. In many cases, this remedy will become more and more efficient, with increasing intervals for need of its application, until at length a man is not sick at all, and life goes out like the snuff of a candle, or as gently as the dying embers on the hearth.

TRY.

LIFE is like a series of stately and beautiful apartments with closed doors; honour, wealth, fame, influence, are each apartment, so to speak, in its great temple; and written over each is the motto, "Try."

It is in vain, young aspirant, that you are endowed with talents, friends, opportunities, unless you try to win in the race of virtuous endeavour.

Few blessings fall in the path like ripe fruit, before the idle and unworthy. If a thing is worth having, it must be laboured for through days and months of patient effort. Diligence, care, energy, must all combine to smooth the paths of the successful.

The highest prizes of life lie like buried gems, hidden among the rubbish of hard, common-place effort. "Here a little, there a little," are the steps which lead to honour; and noble hearts are made such, and proved such by the slow toil of the ascent.

How many gifted by nature, perhaps in a high degree, have failed of success and died heart-broken—their great life-purpose crushed and withered, only because fame and fortune did not spring up in a night, like the "gourd of Jonah"—because their aim did not strike the mark at first, and they were too gifted, too elevated, to—try!

No, the safe, sure path is more beaten. Even genius must work—work hard, and show by its all-conquering patience, that it has its stream higher than the fountains of earth, and can afford to ripple on for years, ere it reaches the level of its own high thoughts.

But to those who are placed among the common duties and trials of life, still the word applies with even greater force—try. Never say what you can do, nor what you cannot do, till you have tried, and patient effort has laid stone upon stone in the temple of your own duties; until, by imperceptible degrees, you have removed the difficulties of your lot, and under a guardian Providence which ever blesses those who labour, have watered the field of all your opportunities. Then, and not till then, despair, when you have exhausted the treasury found in that little word—Try.

M. T. B.

ALETHE.

CHAPTER XXI.

NOR till the rapid motion of the horse revived her did Melicent Rainbold fully understand that she was being carried away from her friends. Her feelings were those of terror and despair. Her first impression was that she was in the power of the Sepoys—the most alarming thought that could have entered her mind.

The suddenness of the transaction had bewildered her. It had not seemed possible that a person could be caught up and spirited away with so much adroitness and celerity.

She had not yet seen the face of the man in whose arms she was held, nor did she dare look over her shoulder to see it. He presently slackened his speed, and two men on horseback came up with him. They were both natives, and Melicent was glad to observe that they did not wear the uniform of the Sepoys. The painted features of Tilac she instantly remembered, for they had been too deeply impressed on her imagination in that moment of consternation when, rushing into her apartment, he caught her in his arms.

The figures on his dark cheeks, the red and white stripes across his forehead, the redness of his teeth, and the craftiness of his eyes, all served to increase her dread and apprehension.

Feeling her trembling in his arms, the person who was supporting her in the saddle now addressed her. It was the first time since her seizure that a word had been spoken.

"Do not distress yourself unnecessarily, Miss Rainbold," he said.

Nothing could have amazed Melicent more than that voice. Indignation now mingled with her fears.

"Mr. Bracegirdle," she said, after two or three stammering efforts to speak, "it is to you, then, that I am indebted for this outrage! To you, Raynor Bracegirdle, the son of my father's friend, and the recipient of my father's hospitality!"

"How have you treated the son of your father's friend, Miss Rainbold?" asked Raynor, with a bitter resentment.

"Better than he deserved," replied Melicent, with hot contempt. "You should have been driven from my home with scorn and reproaches! Ay, you should have been scourged thence!"

"What was my crime, Miss Rainbold? I will tell you. My love was my crime!" said Raynor, bitterly.

"I cast back the falsehood! Your heart was full of crime. Love had no place in it. But there was room enough there for envy, hatred, and murder."

She spoke with cool and cutting severity. For an instant, Bracegirdle was confounded.

"The terms you make use of, Miss Rainbold, are most offensive and unjust."

He tried to assume the air of an injured man.

"It is a flimsy artifice, that of falsehood," returned Melicent. "Your dark secrets are known, not to me only, but to others."

Tilac, the tiger-tamer, bent forward in his saddle to hear her words.

"Tell me, sir, where is your Hyderabad? Perhaps"—she turned her flashing eyes upon Tilac—"perhaps this is he, disguised to suit your occasion."

Tilac shrugged his shoulders, settled into his saddle, and showed his red teeth in a laugh so anomalous that she could not understand it.

Bracegirdle himself appeared struck by this observation, and glanced quickly at the tiger-tamer. As for Melicent, she saw, or thought she saw, a resemblance to Hyderabad in the painted face of Tilac.

"Your allusion to the impostor, Hyderabad," said Raynor, "is to me unintelligible. That he was a base villain may or may not be evident to you or me; but that I had any connection with him is as false as injurious."

"Add not falsehood to falsehood!" she retorted. "It was with that crafty native that you devised the death of Neal Kavanagh."

Tilac looked steadily at his horse's ears. His lips were fixed, expressing nothing but stoical indifference.

"The death of Kavanagh!" repeated Raynor. "Deny it not! I know the method, and the manner of its accomplishment. Hyderabad dropped the fatal poison into the wound."

Glancing at Tilac, Melicent saw but the whites of his eyes rolled upward. Was there anything like Hyderabad about those eyes?

She felt a shudder passing through the arms of Raynor. His heart beat with sudden violence. The certainty that he was revealed to the woman he thought he loved, affected him strangely. She allowed him to suffer a brief space, then added:

"Why do you not ask if he lives?"

"I care not!" muttered Bracegirdle.

"Then you shall remain in doubt. If he lives, it is not by your good-will; if he is dead, it is by your hand. It was not really Hyderabad who dropped the fatal fluid; it was you who poured it into the wound."

"Talk not of this, Miss Rainbold," he replied, gloomily. "Think of yourself, and not of me. Whatever I have done, it was for you that I did it. Bear that in your memory. Bear it now and ever!"

"Knowing that you are a hypocrite and a murderer, what emotions do you hope to excite in me but aversion and horror? The hope of winning my esteem has perished for ever. You can extort nothing from me to make you happy. Render what atonement and reparation you yet may. Return me to those who love me, and do penance ever after for the great crime of your life. I make this appeal earnestly and solemnly."

Tilac threw an inquisitive glance at Melicent.

"It may not be, Miss Rainbold! The die is cast. My choice is made; my destiny recorded."

His brow was lowering, his voice gloomy.

"An evil persisted in is an evil hourly repeated. Your crime becomes thrice a crime; your treachery, thrice treachery."

She paused, surprised at her own firmness.

"The will of the gods," said Tilac, "must be done, though all the people of India oppose it."

"There is but one God," said Melicent.

"True!" responded Tilac. "And we shall not behold him till the morn."

"God," returned Melicent, "is never visible to man."

"Your God is never visible, but mine is," said Tilac, solemnly.

"A Gueber!" exclaimed Melicent.

"I worship Heat and Light. The element of fire is eternal."

There was a dark energy in his words—a latent enthusiasm streaming up faintly from the dead ashes of superstition and ignorance, owing its life to the natural instinct of worship in man.

"When the time comes for Tilac to be absorbed in the glorious element of fire, he will be absorbed. We know when death is near."

Struck by something in his tones, Melicent asked:

"How do you know when death is near?"

"By the inspiration of my faith," answered Tilac, with energy. "Death is near now."

He looked up with an icy smile.

"Do either of you feel cold?"

Bracegirdle shivered.

"Coldness is the shadow of death!" Tilac sighed, and muttered to himself.

"When an icy thrill creeps slowly on one," he added, raising his mysterious eyes again to the face of Melicent, "chilling flesh and blood, soul and spirit, without known cause or comprehended reason, it is the signal of death!"

Bracegirdle started suddenly, and cried out in a tone of horror.

Melicent glanced over her shoulder, and saw a cobra-capello coil itself like lightning round his neck. She did not move, she did not breathe, she did not have but one thought, before the venomous reptile darted its fangs into the flesh.

Raynor's arms relaxed their hold upon Melicent; the bridle dropped from his fingers.

A stony horror overspread his features. With a groan, a moan, and an agonizing cry, he plucked the cobra from his throat, tore it asunder, and cast it upon the ground.

During this time the horses had been going at an easy canter; now, as if controlled by one impulse, they stopped, dilated their nostrils, settled backward upon their haunches, and trembled.

"They feel the death!" said Tilac, in a tone that froze the blood in Melicent's veins. "Animals often know when the divine fire is going out. Dogs sometimes sit at their masters' gates, and howl piteously over the prophecy of death that is within them. Animals are the providences of man. They are not only his servants, his friends, but his monitors."

Melicent sprang from the horses, and shrank with a shudder from the writhing strings of the cobra, tied in quivering knots in the path.

Bracegirdle sat for a few dreadful moments in icy and mortal dread; then drawing forth a revolver with fierce haste, fired six barrels one after the other at Tilac, who sat smiling and motionless on his horse.

"You cannot kill the evil one!" he sneered.

"I thought so! I thought so!" cried Bracegirdle, gnashing his teeth. "You have betrayed me, accursed! But there may be hope."

With these exclamations, he turned his horse, lanced its sides savagely with his spurs, and sprang away on the backward path.

CHAPTER XXII

"Let him ride!" sneered Tilac. "He'll not ride far. The wound will turn dark; a black ooze will gush from it, and he will die in pain."

While Tilac gazed after the vanishing form of Bracegirdle, the realization of her situation burst upon Melicent. She was now in the hands of two natives, of whom she had everything to dread and everything to suspect.

She had gained nothing, she feared, by the late thrilling event. Seeing Tilac and his companion looking after the lessening shape of Bracegirdle, the thought of escape came upon her, and she fled into the jungle, which, in that place, was dense. She ran swiftly, but not far.

The attempt to vie with the speed of Tilac, she knew would fail; she therefore dropped down among the foliage, and lay motionless. It proved the best thing she could have done; for both Tilac and his companion passed her in furious chase.

When their steps sounded far distant, she arose and hurried back to the bridal-path, in which the horses were quietly standing.

Taking a stick from the ground, she struck each a blow, which sent them galloping away. This done, she crept into the vines on the opposite side, and covered close to the earth.

In a few minutes, Tilac and the other returned, astonished and at fault. Discovering that their horses had run away, even the stoicism of Tilac was moved.

"By the burning sun!" he exclaimed, "we prosper not, Kassim. This grieves me more than the treachery of Upas, who tore my sarong and wounded my flesh. She must have hidden. I am always cunning, yet always baffled."

"Yes," answered Kassim, "the prey is ever snatched from your hand. The English girl did well; for to sorrow she would have come at last. Where are our horses, Hyderabad? I had rather have my beautiful mare than your white Englishwoman."

This English girl, Kassim, was fairer than the daughters of earth are wont to be. You have seen me charm the snake; you have seen me hold it in irresistible bondage by the simple power of my will. So this goddess of a woman has charmed me. The charmer is charmed—the tamer is tamed."

Tilac paused, and his brown breast rose and fell with emotion.

"I was fascinated, and I was the serpent under her feet. She detested me as such. She shrank with shuddering and loathing from Hyderabad, or Tilac, or any one with a swarthy skin. Her scorn was like arrows, and her hate like spears. Ah, had she known I was one of the Accursed People, she would have seen me dragged at the feet of wild horses with a feeling of joy! There was no hope for a black son of India. Think not that I loved, Kassim. If I loved, I also hated. My passion was like the glimmer of burnished steel, cold and deadly. She would have withered in my hand. I should have blighted her like the vapours that rise in the valley of the Guevo, Upas, Kassim, my joy is in destruction; my pleasure in pain; my happiness in the misery of others."

"Do you feel cold?" asked Hyderabad.

"Yes," answered Kassim, trembling. "I feel cold."

"It is the shadow of death!" said Tilac; and leaping upon Kassim like a ravenous lion, he slipped a noose over his head, threw him upon his face, stood upon his shoulders, and strangled him.

When life was extinct, he lifted the body, cast it into the bushes, and went his way.

Melicent, from her grassy hiding-place, witnessed this terrific scene with sensations of horror too intense to be described.

Her brain reeled and whirled, and staggered with awe and dread long after the strangler had disappeared from her swimming sight.

CHAPTER XXIII

WHILE Melicent was slowly recovering from the shock her nerves had sustained, a palanquin, borne by four natives, came in sight.

In the palanquin was a European, about thirty years of age, of a pleasing countenance, and wearing the uniform of an officer of high rank. That face gave her confidence.

Her blood thrilled with pleasure. Despair gave place to hope, and sickly fear to healthful anticipation. She obeyed the first impulse of her mind, and arising, hastened to intercept the palanquin. At the first glimpse of her figure, the officer commanded his bearers to halt, and arose from his recumbent position. The natural gallantry of his nation was instantly displayed.

"Lady," he cried, "do I behold the face of a countrywoman? Surely, it is a misfortune alone that brings you here. Nay, speak not. Your pale face, your disheveled hair, your clasped hands, your imploring expression, tell me what is the duty of a true gentleman."

He sprang from the palanquin, and, advancing to Melicent, doffed his military cap, and extended his hand. It was his left hand that he offered.

"Excuse the left hand, madam," he said, "for the right has tasted of rebel steel."

Melicent took the proffered hand with indescribable emotion.

Never, never had human hand appeared so precious. Her feelings overpowered her, and staggering forward, she was received unconscious on the brave breast of the stranger.

With not a little pain to his own wound, with his own hands he placed her in the palanquin. Her wondrous beauty excited not only his sympathies, but his admiration.

With her respiration apparently suspended, her cheeks, ivory white, her long dark lashes closed over her eyes, she presented to him a picture of beauty and helplessness which not only appealed to his manhood, but called forth the tenderest feelings of his soul.

Taking from the pocket of the palanquin a flask, he bathed her brow and moistened her lips with its contents. When indications of returning life appeared, he ordered the bearers to proceed, and watching her countenance unflinchingly, walked by her side.

Melicent went on dreamily. She had but one consciousness, and that was a vague realization of relief and safety. However deep ran the current of her inward withdrawal from the external world, that sense of rescue was present, imminent, delicious. The motion of the palanquin was like the luxuriant undulation of waves; the sound of the Englishman's voice was like a mother's lullaby, inviting repose and confidence.

She drifted on like a living dream: like a fancy swimming in a Lethæan river; like a thought divorced from care.

If Melicent sighed, it was not from suffering; if her lips quivered, it was not from fear; if she clasped her white hands, it was not a prayer for mercy, for she knew that an English officer walked beside her, and in her weakness, in the reaction of her overwrought sensibilities, she remembered her country-

and had faith in the national honour. She tried to smile her gratitude, and then, despite her best resolutions, sank into a state of dreaminess.

In this tranquil condition Melicent was carried a long distance, through an unfrequented and narrow way, where there was scarcely room to admit the passage of the palanquin. She revived while being borne up a flight of stone steps.

A large door was then opened in an antique-looking building, and the palanquin set down in a wide, stone hall. Melicent perceived at once that she was in an old idol temple. The officer assisted her to alight, and seeing that she was quite restored, was exceedingly gratified. He introduced himself.

"My name, Madam, is Argent," he said. "I hold the rank of Colonel in the British Army. My regiment is now in active service, and it is my misfortune, and not my fault, that I am not at the head of it. Having been wounded with the sabre of a malicious spy, I was considered unfit for duty, and with a few trusty men, took charge of some English ladies, most of them wives and daughters of the officers in my regiment. Among those ladies was a beloved sister. I accepted this trust as a solemn duty, and have discharged it to the best of my ability. With infinite difficulty, and after many escapes and thrilling adventures, I succeeded in safely reaching this old temple, which a devoted servant informed me was a place so remote and little visited, that we might remain concealed here, unobserved, a long time. The temple is large, with innumerable secret avenues and priestly contrivances, which kept me continually making fresh discoveries and finding new hiding-places. To the ladies I have spoken of, Madam, I shall now have much pleasure in conducting you."

"Colonel Argent," answered Melicent, joyfully affected by what she had heard, "nothing could be more agreeable than the turn which Providence has given my fortunes within the last hour. The particular I will tell you when I am somewhat recovered from fatigue and excitement. I am the daughter of Major Alexis Rainbold, of whom you may have heard. Last night, I was suddenly seized, placed on a horse, and hurried away. What transpired afterwards, you shall know in good time."

It was now morning. The sun had not arisen, but there was a ruddy glow in the east that betokened his coming. It was not yet light enough to see in the temple. Colonel Argent rang a bell, and an English soldier, with a wooden leg, appeared with a lamp. Looking around her, Melicent saw various niches, in some of which were hideous idols.

"I have heard of Major Rainbold," said Argent, looking the way. "He is a brave officer, and has seen service. I am most fortunate in being able to offer shelter and safety to his daughter."

The colonel never spoke with more sincerity in his life. His whole deportment bore testimony to the interest Melicent had excited in his mind.

As the wooden-legged soldier went stumping before him, and the young lady leaned timidly upon his arm, there was a flutter of his nerves and a turmoil of the blood that he had never before experienced.

After many and, to Melicent, inexplicable windings and turnings, opening and shutting of doors, she was finally ushered into the presence of the ladies alluded to. Her reception was all she could have wished—friendly, cordial, and earnest. When she had related the incidents of the night just passed, their interest and kindness, if possible, increased. The colonel's sister, a fair-haired, blue-eyed girl, was particularly attentive and sympathizing. When it was presently insisted upon that Melicent should take some repose, this fair girl sat by her till she awoke, soothing her troubled feelings, and watching anxiously her fevered dreams.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The elephant swept on. He seemed an immense machine hurled from a gigantic engine. Although the bones laid back their ears, stretched out their necks, and devoured the ground with their advancing feet, they soon were left behind, and Barnabas was obliged to slacken the speed of Methuselah.

"It is most exciting!" said Ida. "If Melicent were with us, I could almost feel happy. This is a royal hunt, Mr. Hutton."

"Well, it's about as spry as they make. You wouldn't think such a wounded great critter was spry, would ye? Spry! Bless your pretty face, Miss Ida! He hasn't scarcely started yet. You see I get him partly for the turf, partly for his intelligence, and partly for his strength. That makes three parties; and he's got 'em, I vow! He's got the ad rovers both in speed, sagacity, and power. And as for size, now, there isn't one that can compete with him in bigness."

Barnabas paused, and bending forward, patted one of Methuselah's broad ears with his lance, which he never forgot to take with him.

"If he has an elephant," he added, with pride,

"he must be an elephant like Methuselah. He must. Yes!"

Mr. Hutton pronounced the concluding words with the greatest complacency. But he was not a little startled just then at hearing Upas—whose muzzle, as she sat placidly on the elephant, reached, over his shoulder, in close proximity to his cheek and ear—emit a most unexpected and astounding roar.

Barnabas was so astounded by this explosion that he ploughed forward to Methuselah's head without ceremony.

Safely lodged on this expansive surface, he turned round and presented a face so full of comical amazement, that it excited the risibility of both the girls.

Hutton brought his lance into warlike position; but Upas, with her handsome head in the air, did not in the least notice him. She repeated the prolonged and singular sound. It was answered afar off in the jungle.

Miss Macgregor was looking at Alethe, and observed that she grew pale; that her lips parted; that her eyes dilated. She could not comprehend this change, but continued to look at her.

Upas threw her nose in the air again, and reiterated the note that had produced so much surprise. It was now neither harsh nor abrupt; but soft, musical, and protracted.

Without the lapse of a moment, the swelling tigress was responded to; but it was not a melodious wail; it was a deep, startling roar.

"A decoy tigress!" exclaimed Alethe, in great alarm.

"A decoy tigress? What do you mean, little 'un?" asked Barnabas.

"Upas is a decoy. She has been trained to allure the fierce lords of the forest from their secret lairs. It is the work of Tilac! Every male tiger within the sound of her voice will be upon us. We may need a score of beaters and hunters to repel them, and we may need no more than your single arm, aided by Upas and the elephant. Heaven only knows! Where is my—where is my master?"

She stopped and strained her eyes on the backward path.

"I see him—I see him!" she added, clasping her hands. "Isn't he a brave, handsome man, Miss Macgregor? Don't you love him, Miss Macgregor?"

"Yes," answered Ida, astonished and bewildered. "I love my guardian."

"You ought—you ought! You cannot find a braver man or a kinder gentleman. Ask him to expose you to danger, and he would go into a towering rage; ask him to risk his life for you, and he'd smile. What can be better than that? Do you know anything more exalted, Ida?"

Miss Macgregor, impelled by a kindly influence, laid her hands on the shining hair of Alethe, and looked into her face as she had never done before. There was love, doubt, surprise, in that look.

"Alethe," she said, in a gentle tone, "forgive me if I have ever called you aught but sister. I knew," she whispered, "there was a mystery in the whiteness of your skin and the Christian sweetness of your temper; but your secret never before shone from your eyes or spoke to me in the ineffable tenderness of your lips."

Ida kissed the girl's forehead. Alethe began to weep.

"You have betrayed me!" she murmured. "You have ravished from me my inner life. But your eyes and your kisses might betray one wiser than I. I complain not, I reproach not, I only ask silence. For the sake of Melicent, for the sake of him (see how brave he looks!) I ask silence."

Those words were whispered most hurriedly and most softly into the ear of Ida, which the white lips of Alethe touched.

"Fear not!" responded Miss Macgregor, deeply moved. "A bond is established between us that may never, never be broken. Trust, my dreamy-eyed, trust!"

"By George! You gals 'pear to be meltin' and runnin' together. I don't see what's the good of kissin' and cryin'. Let the varmint roar. Who cares for roarin'? I don't, and Methuselah don't. Bless your little weak bodies, he could kill a regiment of 'em! Don't be uneasy—don't. Pray keep the watery elements in their nat'ral reservoir, and don't drown your pretty eyes. A drowned pair o' eyes is dim, and ain't the things to look at."

Both Ida and Alethe smiled at honest Barnabas.

"That's more cheerful like," quoth he. "We can take care of ourselves, I'll warrant."

Upas cried out again, and the masculine voice responded much nearer than before.

"Can't you stop her?" asked Barnabas. "Clap a break on her organs." His voice betrayed some uneasiness.

"Tilac has trained her. Habit is stronger in this instance, than my influence. Be prepared, Mr. Barnabas, for a conflict. The male tiger will soon be upon

us, and Upas will attack it; but I fear she will not be equal to the struggle. Bring your elephant to her help."

A tremendous roar shook the jungle. A splendid full-grown tiger sprang into the narrow track before them. Upas bounded over the head of Barnabas, and alighted on the ground.

The stranger tiger was not disposed to combat, but Upas darted on him like an arrow, and a fierce conflict followed.

"Methuselah—Methuselah!" cried Barnabas. "Pick him out—pick him out, old boy! Don't let him git the better of the little 'un. At him, I say, at him!"

Animated by the earnest voice of Hutton—and Methuselah needed small incentive when a flight was in view—the elephant rushed to the whirling and mixed mass of tiger, and darting out his trunk, seized the new-comer with unerring certainty, and lifted him into the air; but both tigers were so closely and so savagely interlocked, that they rose together in the omnipotent grasp of Methuselah. Upas guided by her instincts and her training, and seeing how the battle was being decided, struggled free, and dropped lightly to the earth.

But the wild, princely, and hitherto unmatched male writhed hopelessly in the coil of the elephant; his ribs yielded, his bones cracked like glass, and his proud life was extinguished.

Methuselah carried the quivering and unresisting weight a short distance, then dropped it with a shrill whistle of disdain and triumph.

Upas watched its conquered foe a moment, and then flew back to Alethe with the lightness of a bird, and put up its head to be caressed. Alethe could not resist the eloquent appeal.

However mistaken the action, the motive was of the best, and in harmony with her education. Her eyes sparkled like the fire of a forge. Her mouth was open, her tongue thrust out, and her chest heaving with recent exertion; but there was a perceptible and comprehensible expression and glow of pride in the dumb face of Upas. It would have been cruel not to respond to it.

Alethe threw her arms round her neck, kissed her soft head, and spoke kindly to her.

The creature seemed ready to die with pride and pleasure; for it is the same with man or animal, a sense of duty done brings happiness. Every gradation of life is governed by its instincts or its wisdom. Upas was governed by her instincts and her wisdom.

Barnabas Hutton witnessed this, not only with wonder, but admiration.

He really believed that Alethe never did and never would do anything that was not entirely warranted by the circumstances of the case.

Barnabas trusted in Alethe and Methuselah. He knew what these had done. He had been an eyewitness of the courage and devotion of the first, and, as for the latter, long companionship had assured him of his fidelity and friendship.

"By Jove," the major cried, spurring up, "the jungle is full of tigers!"

"There's one of 'em I'll make you a present of," answered Barnabas, pointing to the lifeless animal that lay in the path. "If any more on 'em come, they'll git the same reception."

"Dead!" exclaimed Kavanagh.

"Dead!" said the major.

"Dead!" quoth Barnabas.

He looked humorously at the major.

"Have hard work to keep up, don't ye?" Then to Alethe: "You'll have to tie a string round that kitten's neck, if it's goin' to make them noises. We can't stop to fight with tigers every few minutes. If we're goin' on a reg'lar hunt, I'd rather take daylight for't."

"I'll try and keep her quiet, Mr. Barnabas," replied Alethe.

"I wonder what's comin' now?" said Hutton, who was ever on the alert.

This query referred to a sound resembling the rapid gallop of a horse, and which soon proved to be such.

While all eyes were fastened in the direction of the clattering, a man on horseback suddenly appeared, whom they recognized. It was Raynor Bracegirdle. He drew up his horse, and with every sign of intense excitement.

"I am bitten! I am bitten!" he cried. His pallid face, his despairing voice, and the general agitation of his manner, showed how terribly he realised his situation.

The party looked at him with dismay. Barnabas was the first to speak.

"What's the matter of ye?" he asked. "You look like a ghost a-horseback."

"I have been bitten by a cobra-capello! Will you sit looking at me like statues? Cannot something be done? Will you see me die miserably before your eyes without lifting a hand?" exclaimed Bracegirdle, in startling accents.



[THE ABDUCTION OF MELICENT.]

"Don't know what we can do for ye," answered Barnabas. "The bite of one of them snakes is deadly poison. Shouldn't want one of 'em to tackle me, not by no means. Folks never get over them kind o' hurts, I've heard."

Alethe slid down from the elephant. The movement was so quick, that Hutton was not aware of it till he saw her standing on the ground.

"Shall I save him, Mr. Barnabas?" she asked, as if arrested by a sudden thought.

"I don't know! He don't seem scarcely worth it. Howsoever, if you've got that antidote about ye, you'd better try it. I don't like to see a fellow critter die."

"I thought you'd say so, Mr. Barnabas," answered Alethe. She turned to Bracegirdle. "Get off your horse. Be quick, for the venom of the cobra is speedy."

"I know not what you mean," said Raynor; "but in heaven's name try what you will."

He threw himself from his horse, and baring his neck, kneeled at Alethe's feet.

"There! there is the wound!" he gasped. "Do you not see it? I feel death already in my veins. It is stealing upon me. There is ice in my blood!"

"Keep still. Do not tremble. You can die but once. Even good men must die once," said Alethe, producing the serpentine vial, and preparing to apply its contents.

"Good men," groaned Bracegirdle, "can die easier than I. Save me! save me!"

She dropped the sparkling elixir into the wound. Bracegirdle shivered and writhed.

"It scorches," said he, "like fire! It thrills through me as lightning. Girl! girl! I fear you have deceived me. You excite hope, that my despair may be more dreadful."

"Look at him!" replied Alethe, pointing to Kavanagh.

Bracegirdle raised his eyes, and seeing the young officer, was greatly amazed.

"The dead comes to reproach me!" he muttered.

"I am surely dying, for phantoms sit before my failing sight. All things reel; all things stagger; all things fall! The earth slips from beneath my feet; I slide off; I go down into the vortex! Oh, for some human hand to grasp!" Bracegirdle spoke in agony and bitterness; in fear, in remorse. He saw his sins overtaking him; he saw his hypocrisy rolling upon him like billows of the sea, engulfing him for ever.

"Take my hand! take my hand!" said Alethe. "Hold it fast! hold it fast! It will keep you on earth. It will keep you from darkness."

Bracegirdle clutched her hand like a drowning man. He pressed it to his forehead; he held it in both his; he clung to it as to his life; he sobbed upon it piteously.

There is nothing like a friendly human hand in the hopeless hour of the soul's dread and darkness. It is more than gold—it is more than houses and lands.

"You will live, Mr. Bracegirdle, you will live," said Alethe, allowing him to crush her little hand in his, to bruise it, to moisten it with his tears, and to kiss it.

He believed himself dying. In the hour of dying one must have something tangible to grasp. Uncertainty will not do. Dying flesh and blood clings to living flesh and blood with inexpressible yearning. No matter whether the dying be good or bad, it is the same.

"You will live, Mr. Bracegirdle, you will live," repeated Alethe. "This is a sovereign antidote for poison. It saved him."

She pointed to Kavanagh. "It saved him!" said Bracegirdle, somewhat wildly.

"A single drop, Mr. Bracegirdle."

"But there is a difference!" moaned Raynor. "He deserved to be saved; I do not. I, the betrayer, have been betrayed. By the hand of Tilac I perish. Rainbold—Kavanagh, should you ever find this Tilac, slay him as you would a venomous reptile!"

"How do you feel?" asked Alethe. "Is there not a burning in the wound, and a thrill in your blood?"

"I can almost think so," said Raynor, slowly.

"Think again."

"It is true. There is a glow in my blood. The ice changes to fire. I swelter—I burn!"

"It will pass," said Alethe.

"Hear me!" exclaimed Raynor. "If I live, my life shall be at your service. I freely lay it at your feet. Tread on it as you would on a serpent, or use it as you please. It shall be no longer mine."

"Vows made in peril are incipient lies. The man who is bad, is bad from his own nature, and bad he will ever remain. Arise, Mr. Bracegirdle, mount your horse, and go whither you will. You are snatched from death, and for that be thankful. That which saved him saves you."

She again pointed at Kavanagh.

"Had he died, you also would have died. That which thwarted you also saves you."

"Is everybody listenin' to this?" asked Barnabas, aglow with honest, earnest enthusiasm. "For the

sake o' human natur', I hope your faculties are lively. The way I look at things, nothin' can be more instructive nor this. Look at that small gal, will ye?"

Barnabas pointed his arm at Alethe.

The major looked at him very affectionately indeed, and as he had never before looked at him. He appeared to have made an important discovery. What could it have been?

"There's a girl," continued Barnabas, "that don't perforce to be a Christian; that don't perforce nothin'; and yet you see she's done it. Not everybody would have done it. But, major"—he turned to Rainbold—"she isn't so dark as some o' the natives. There's more white in her than there is of t'other. Now, major"—he raised his right hand, which had the lance in it—"that colour's superior to any other. I like it better, and it is better!"

"You're a fine fellow!" vociferated the major. "I should like a regiment of such lads, and if I had 'em, I'd march to the relief of Lucknow without loss of time."

"He glanced again at Hutton, then at Alethe; but his eye dwelt longest, and apparently with most pleasure, on the latter."

"Mount your horse, Mr. Bracegirdle," repeated Alethe, and go your way. The danger, as I have told you, is past. Trust not, in future, the friendship of bad men."

"Accursed Tilac!" muttered Bracegirdle.

He arose from the earth upon which he had sunk after the application of the elixir. He did not think he had strength to stand, or recover his seat in the saddle; but upon making the trial, he found himself stronger than he had thought. A pleasant languor stole over him. Despair was succeeded by calmness, and fear by confidence.

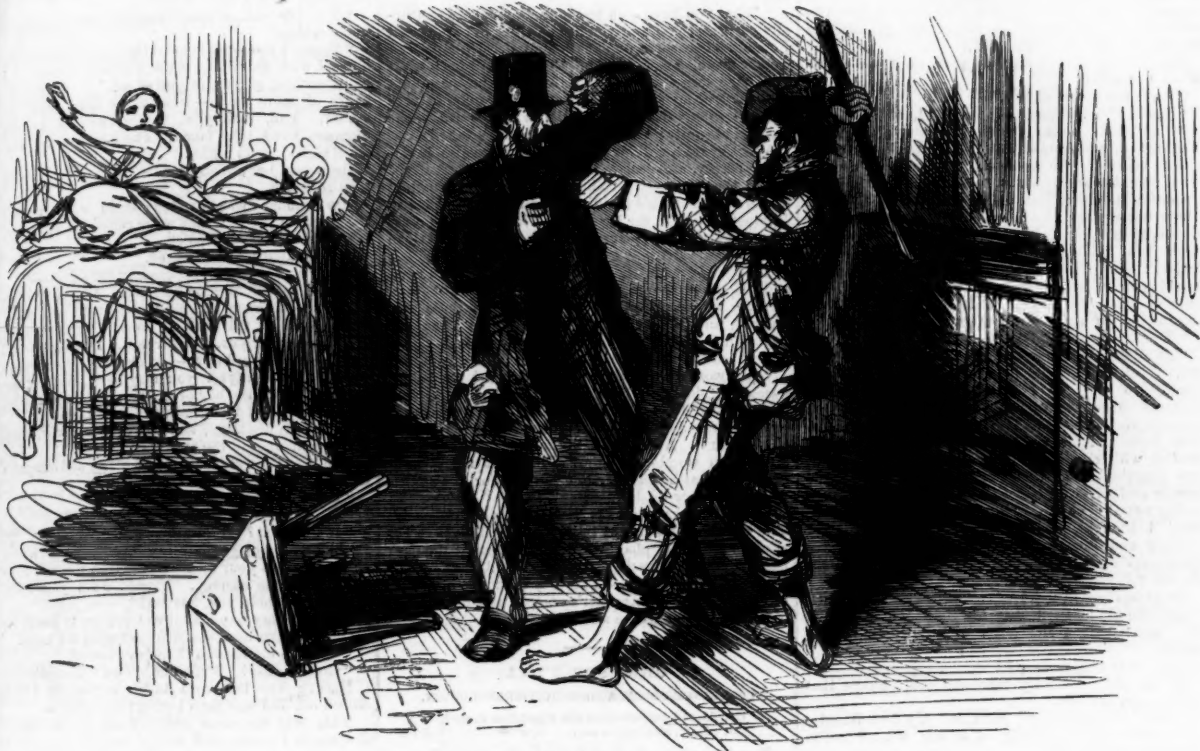
"Where is Melicent?" whispered Alethe, fully persuaded that he had been the cause of her disappearance.

The face of Bracegirdle became suffused with shame.

"You require of me," he said, in a subdued voice, "a humiliating confession. I see before me"—he looked at Rainbold and Kavanagh—"two against whom I have sinned deeply. Spare me the confusion of confession till I am stronger. I left Miss Rainbold in the hands of Tilac. If you hasten, you may be able to overtake them. Do not delay. Tell Hutton to advance with all speed."

While Barnabas was assisting Alethe to re-mount the elephant, she communicated the information she had received, and they set forward at a rapid rate, followed at a slower pace by Bracegirdle.

(To be continued.)



[THE STRUGGLE IN COOTER'S HOUSE.]

THE SEVENTH MARRIAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Warning Voice," "Man and his Idol," "Mrs. Larkins' Boarding School," &c.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE UNEXPECTED MEETING.

"Tell us," they said, "for you have older years, What is this love that each of us has found? Is it a thing for laughter, or for tears?" Anon

The uplifted weapon did not sweep downward into the heart of the intended victim.

While a cry of terror rose to the lips of Constance Lomax, she saw the arm of the strange being who stood over her drop powerless, as if paralyzed, while the hand with which he still grasped her wrist relaxed, and he tottered back, overcome with horror at his own act.

"Leave me," he gasped, "for heaven's sake, leave me!"

But the girl could only gaze at him with a white and rigid face. Terror had deprived her alike of the power to move or speak.

"Go, I tell you," said the other, savagely. "Why don't you go? Why do you stand there, freezing the blood in my veins? I've forgot myself once, and may do it again; and if I do, heaven help you!"

He put out his hands as if to thrust away the sight of her, or to save himself from some temptation which he was fearful of his power to withstand.

To his dismay, Constance fell upon her knees, heedless of the wet flags—heedless of the heavy rain, and raised her hands toward him.

"Release me from my oath!" she cried, in tones of piteous earnestness. "If you are innocent, nothing can hurt you! If you are guilty, I must not, I dare not save you at the cost of Arthur's life! I did not come here to anger or provoke you; but because the conviction which Haverling's cruel death has awakened in my mind has grown a torture too great for endurance. I pity you, my heart bleeds for you; but I have no right to shelter the guilty at the cost of the innocent. And I will not. I came here to warn you so far, and to tell you that henceforth my lips are unsealed. It would have been wicked had I spoken without first warning you! It would be worse if I allowed any fear of consequences to hold me silent now."

Exasperated, rather than moved, by these words, the man repeated his former exclamation.

"Go!" he said. "I hold you to your oath."

"But Arthur—" she pleaded.

"You have chosen between him and me," was the fierce rejoinder. "You are sworn to keep my secret, at all risks, till I release you from your obligation. Take care how you trifle with your oath and me. And now, in heaven's name—begone!"

Repeating that former action of his, he seemed to fling her from him, and turned away.

Constance struggled to her feet, and appeared as if she would again address him; but if this was her intention, it was frustrated by the imperative tone in which he bade her begone, while he himself moved slowly away, and was soon lost in the darkness.

The wind blew in sharp, cutting gusts, and the rain fell heavily; yet for some moments Constance Lomax remained on the spot on which she had knelt, unconscious of both—unconscious of anything except a conflict of emotions raging in her mind.

"What is my duty?" she ejaculated at length.

"Oh, that I could see the path, and had the power to follow in it! It cannot be a sister's part to stand mute and see a brother perish; yet if I should be mistaken? If this oath should have been imposed to cover some venial fault only, and a word of mine should set the hounds of justice on a false scent—no, no! I dare not think of it! My brain whirls, my heart sickens! Oh, would that I were dead!—that I were dead!"

Alas! death—from whose approach the happy shrink in terror—comes not at the longing of the wretched! It was in vain that this despairing woman prayed in her bright youth for the repose of the grave. Life, not death, was before her; existence, with its sorrows and vicissitudes, was to be her portion, not the oblivion for which her heart yearned.

Overcome with the scene through which she had just passed, yet rousing herself to the necessity of returning home as speedily as possible, Constance hurried from the paved court, near which she stood, and which at that hour was desolate and silent as a tomb, into the thoroughfare adjoining it.

That was little more cheerful, and she was just awakening to the improbability of obtaining a cab there at that hour, when she was startled by the appearance of a man, who stepped abruptly from the gloom beneath a solitary lamp.

"Hamnet Tresillian!" she exclaimed, in dismay, as she recognized a familiar face.

"Yes," replied Hamnet, for it was he; "if you are returning, I shall be happy to escort you to where a vehicle may be obtained."

Her lips framed some gracious acknowledgment—

she scarcely knew what—so great was her agitation and embarrassment. For some moments she could neither overcome her surprise, not unmingled with a thrill of pleasure, nor regain her self-possession.

"It—it is strange that we should meet thus," she faltered, at length.

"It would be," was the young man's reply, "had our meeting been purely accidental."

The words filled her with alarm.

"What? Is it not by mere chance that you are here?" she ventured to ask.

"No," was his reply.

"I have been followed, then?—watched?" she asked, with terror.

"I cannot deny it," was the answer. "But—"

"Hamnet!" interposed Constance, warmly, "think what you are admitting. It is a disgrace to act the part of a spy; it is mean, pitiful, unmanly. And yet you plead guilty to that!"

"Hardly to that," replied the other—they were walking side by side as they conversed—"hardly to that, as, I believe, you will own. A few words will explain what brought me here, and, I hope, will serve as my justification in coming. You are aware—I think you are aware—that for some time I have regarded your sister Ada with a feeling to which I can give but one name, that of the most devoted love."

"Love!"

The word was echoed so faintly that it did not reach Hamnet's ear; but he paused and turned to his companion, half conscious of some convulsive thrill passing over her.

"You are cold?" he asked, thinking she shuddered.

"No."

"You are tired—may I offer you my arm?"

His arm? No! He offered it as he spoke, but she drew back, and refused it firmly.

"You were speaking—" she said.

"Of my affection for your sister. As I was saying, you, no doubt, knew of this, and believed, as I believed, that it was reciprocated. Within these few days that illusion has been dispelled. She does not love me, Constance."

"No?" the girl demanded, eagerly.

"Or, if she does, her affection is overruled by considerations which render my fate hopeless. You know to what I allude? No? Is it possible? You do not know that the banker, Garmeson, has supplanted me, if not in her affections, at least in outward consideration?"

Again Constance shuddered.

At the mention of the banker's name, her thoughts

flew back to the interview in which she had learned the dreadful secret of the forgery, and there flashed across her mind the suspicion that the hapless Ada had compromised herself by some fatal promise, as the price of Arthur's reputation.

But, dismissing the idea as soon as it was entertained, she said:

"I was not aware of this."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Hamnet. "I, at least, can have no doubt as to the truth. I have learned it from herself, and from—her accepted suitor," he added, bitterly. "I need not explain, nor need I dwell upon the anguish the discovery has caused me. I mention it only to justify, in some degree, the step I have taken to-night, and which it may seem, in some degree, to extenuate. Upon this blow to my affections there has followed the tragedy which involves Arthur's life. He is my oldest and dearest friend. I would answer for his innocence with my life, and, in spite of what has happened, I resolved to see Ada, and to offer my services in her brother's behalf."

"You are so good!" Constance murmured.

"At all events, I am not so brave as I thought myself. When I reached the house to-night, I had not the courage to enter. I loitered about in the closing darkness, uncertain how to act, when, as I stood opposite, the door of the house opened, and some one stole forth. 'It is she,' I thought, and my heart swelled with emotion. Then I perceived that she was disguised, and that her movements indicated secrecy and a fear of detection. Then a jealous misgiving seized upon me. 'She is keeping an assignation,' I thought, and I felt that I could kill my wealthy and favoured rival. I little thought it was the resemblance of your face to her's which made me do Ada this injustice."

He little thought that!

As little did he think that his words were piercing, like dagger-points, the heart of his listening companion.

"And you followed me?"

It was with difficulty that she could shape that question on her lips.

"Yes," he replied, "I own it. My first impulse was to seize the opportunity of saying what I had to speak of Arthur; but when I saw the secrecy with which you secured a cab, and noticed the whispered direction given, the demon in my heart overcame me. I resolved to follow, and see the adventure to its close. My cab kept yours in view, and when you alighted I was but a few yards distant. And it was then that I perceived the mistake I had made. A turn of the head, a movement of the hand, a nameless something—not the face—revealed the twin-sister."

"And, your jealous fears quite gone, you still did not return?" said Constance.

"Is curiosity ever justifiable in our sex?" the youth asked, with a smile. "If so, it surely was in this case. Your disguise, the secrecy of your movements, the questionable character of the neighbourhood to which you had come, the lateness of the hour, and your totally unprotected state, all impressed me. I persuaded myself that what I had to say of Arthur was fitter for your ears, and satisfying my conscience so, I waited the opportunity of speaking with you. As I did so, the noisy revellers passed, and I saw you shrink into the doorway, and when I looked for you again, to my surprise—will you pardon my saying so?—you were not alone."

Constance had been terrified before, but it was as nothing to the feeling of that moment.

"You saw the—the person who accompanied me?" she faltered.

"I did. I caught sight of him, but only for a moment."

"You saw his face?"

"Yes. At first I thought it was Arthur himself."

"Arthur?"

"Of course, a moment's reflection showed me that that was impossible; but there was something in the features so like—"

"No, oh, no, Hamnet, you mistake!" interrupted the girl, with an eager, impatient manner. "Indeed, you mistake!"

"It was my fancy, then. I had been thinking so much of Arthur that I might have been mistaken. At all events, a second look convinced me, and as I saw you move off together, I was surprised at my own mistake."

"You followed us?" demanded Constance, in an injured tone.

"With my eyes only. I saw that you entered the street, from which you afterwards emerged alone, and I waited where you found me."

"The sound of our voices reached you?"

"Faintly."

"You heard us in conversation?"

"I did, but did not catch a word of what passed. I waited because I was both surprised and alarmed, and because I wished to express to you how anxious I am to be of service to Arthur in this dreadful crisis."

As he ceased, Constance reflected for a moment, then said:

"What you have seen to-night, Hamnet, has naturally surprised you, and you have a right to expect that I should offer some explanation of it. Unhappily, I cannot do so. I can only hope that you will keep what you have seen a secret—will think the best, and not the worst, of my strange conduct. Your good opinion is more to me than that of the whole world"—she stopped abruptly; then added, "for Ada's sake."

What could a gallant youth do, but promise inviolable secrecy, and declare himself more than satisfied? Yet the distracted girl knew, with the rare instinct of her sex, that this night's proceedings had added in Hamnet's mind to the suspicion with which he must have regarded her—suspicion of a nature fatal to women.

This brief conversation had brought them to an open and populous thoroughfare, where, late as it was, vehicles were constantly passing. One of these was secured, and Constance took her seat. Then the young man wished her a safe journey home, raised his hat, and disappeared.

"His words were cold and formal," exclaimed Constance, as she sank back in her seat and burst into tears; "he did not offer me his hand. He thinks me wicked, degraded, unworthy of his regard. Hamnet, of all others! And I thought he loved me, as I have loved, have worshipped him. Fool that I have been not to see that he has only tolerated me for Ada's sake. And now—now he despises me!"

She buried her face in her hands, and wept piteously. The events of the night presented themselves to her mind in a hideous phantasmagoria. Against the dark background of Havering's murder and Arthur's perilous situation, there stood out, in maddening intensity, the thought of the stranger's cruelty, and of Hamnet Trevelian's indifference and mistrust.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONSTANCE FORMS A DESPERATE RESOLUTION.

Bewildered and amazed she wandered thence, But where, she could not tell. *Elie.*

THE immediate effect of the step Constance Lomax had thus taken was to increase the difficulties of her position.

So far as the murder was concerned, she had set out with a torturing suspicion, and had returned with that suspicion a thousand-fold confirmed.

A few words will let the reader into her confidence in this matter.

It will be recollected that after the scene at Woodbine cottage, on the day of the murder, Constance had succeeded in making her escape. She was a stranger to the neighbourhood, and was afraid of encountering Havering, who was pretty sure to start in pursuit of her, as he in reality did. Under that double disadvantage she could only follow the instinct of self-preservation and take the most secluded road which presented itself as likely to lead to the object of which she was in quest, namely, a railway station. The not unnatural result was that she wandered some miles out of her way, and found herself at nightfall on the open common, with anything but a clear notion of the direction in which she should next bend her steps.

Darkness was coming on, and the mists rose, fold on fold, from the low-lying and marshy ground, stretching away before her. Not a living being was to be seen; not even a shepherd, though the faint tinkle of a sheep-bell was sometimes audible. That she had lost herself by taking a road which wound in a direction contrary to that she had expected, was clear to the belated girl, and the only help for it was that she should retrace her steps.

Disheartening as this was, it seemed the only course open to her, and acting on the idea, Constance had already turned and proceeded some distance, when she was started by a footstep—a light, hurried step on the grass close beside her.

Looking round she saw a man hurrying forward, and apparently anxious to pass her without observation. Where he had sprung from she could not conceive; why he should avoid her was equally inexplicable. But all she thought of at that moment was that here was some one who might know the locality, and be able to point out the way to her.

Full of that idea, she stopped.

The stranger stopped also, and looked furtively round, as if prepared to dart off, across the open country. But if he had any such idea, he promptly abandoned it, and came forward, fixing a searching glance on the girl's face, just visible in the waning light.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

Instead of replying the girl uttered a faint cry, and shrunk from him.

"You know me?" he cried savagely.

"Yes."

"No! It's a mistake! You never—what? As I live—'tis Ada!"

He was so startled at the upturned face that he staggered back a step or two.

"Not Ada—Constance," was the faint rejoinder to his question.

"Pshaw! nonsense!" cried the stranger, recovering himself with an effort, yet still greatly agitated. "I know nothing of you, or you of me. It was a chance guess of mine as to—what name did I say? No matter. And, look you, you're deceived, by some likeness, some idle fancy. Faces alter in the dusk. Good night! good night!"

He waved her off, and took a stride or two forward, then returned.

His manner was excited; there was a nervous twitching of the lips, and as he raised his right hand it trembled as if with palsy.

"You call'd me?" he asked.

"No," was the faint response; "but—but—"

"You persist in your delusion. As you like, between us—between us, mark me—but not to others. Not a word of this meeting to a living soul, or, by the heaven above us, you'll rue it. I've reasons—and good ones, as you know—for keeping my movements close. And whatever you may hear, whatever may come to light, no blabbing, mind. No chattering. Not a syllable of this meeting. Promise me!"

Constance hesitated, she scarce knew why, except that the manner of the man terrified her.

The hesitation seemed both to alarm and exasperate him.

"Promise me, I say!" he gasped.

"If you wish it, I will," the girl replied.

"If I wish it? I do wish it. Promise me. No, you'll break a promise—swear to me that you will not of this escapes your lips. Swear that you will maintain inviolable secrecy. Come! upon your knees, swear it—so help you, heaven!"

He seized her hand, as if to force her to kneel; but shrinking from him, she dropped upon her knees.

"So help me heaven!" she murmured.

"Good. Rise! Some one comes. Remember!"

Hissing the last word in her ear as she rose, he darted off, and was soon lost in the darkness.

This was the scene which dwelt in the mind of Constance Lomax, and which had derived peculiar significance from subsequent events. It was the recollection of this which prompted her to seek out the stranger in the manner we have described, both for the sake of her own peace of mind, and in order that she might decide on her future course of action.

"If," she had argued with herself, "this oath was forced on me for any trivial purpose, or to serve my passing object, I may induce him to free me from the obligation of it. If not—if it was dictated by a sense of danger, as the result of crime, he will hold me to the terms of it. In any case, by refusing to regard myself as any longer bound by an enforced promise, I shall satisfy the torturing doubts which now drive me to the verge of distraction."

She was right.

The result had proved that.

She had satisfied herself that the oath she had taken had been imposed on her, with some real and tangible purpose, and that this purpose still remained in force. Was it difficult for her to understand the nature of it?

Rather was it possible for her to doubt that the man whom she had encountered thus strangely had bound her to secrecy, under an oath, to conceal the fact of his being on the spot or which Leonard Havering met his violent death?

That conclusion could not be withheld.

It forced itself upon her whether she would or no. And with it came the inevitable question—What ought she to do? What was her plain, clear, imperative duty?

All the weary night after her return, she lay tossing and turning upon her couch, tortured by the pressure of this thought, and by the recollection of the interview with Hamnet Trevelian. Morning found her pale, haggard, and unrefreshed, still thinking, still endeavouring, with a throbbing brow and fevered brain, to shape out the course she ought to pursue.

"The innocent must not suffer for the guilty," she repeated, to herself, again and again, as if that was the only decision which she could place clearly before her.

But who was innocent?—who guilty?

The manner of the man who had overtaken her on the common had, from first to last, been most suspicious, more especially in the fact that, in a moment of desperation, he had been driven to the verge of personal violence; but, on the other hand, what an overwhelming force of evidence weighed against her brother Arthur! Not a link was wanting in the chain of evidence tending to his conviction. Constance thought of this, and shuddered. She thought of this, and the dreadful consequences of any word or act of hers, came upon her with overwhelming intensity.

"I might seal the doom of the innocent," she thought, and the idea was intolerable.

As she lay, writhing under the effects of it in the grey dawn, her sister Ada stole in and stood by her bedside.

"You are not sleeping?" she asked.

"No, darling."

Ada put her hands to her brow, and sighed despondently.

"Shall we ever again know what happy, peaceful rest is?" she murmured, more as if communing with her own sad heart than addressing her sister.

"You have passed a sleepless night?" Constance asked, with ready sympathy.

"Yes—oh, yes. How can I sleep and Arthur where he is? Arthur in prison, and on such a charge?"

"And the evidence against him is so strong," said Constance, pursuing the line of thought which had been occupying her own mind.

"Yes; yet even now they are not satisfied," returned Ada. "The police are busy adding link to link."

Do not be alarmed, dear, but only last night an officer came here to inquire the nature of the evidence you were prepared to give—"

"I—against Arthur?"

"Unfortunately it seems inevitable. I would not pain you for the world; I know that Lady Severn and all of them are unjust in their suspicion of you; but think, dear, how prominently your name has come forward, and how natural it is that you should be required to give your version of the events in which you have taken part."

Constance buried her face in her hands.

"What shall I do? Oh, what shall I do?" she asked.

In ignorance of what had happened, and of the mental struggle through which her twin-sister had just passed, Ada strove in vain to console her.

"It is but to speak the truth," Ada said.

"The truth?"

"Yes. It is hard that your lips should breathe a word that may imperil Arthur, but—"

Constance put up her hands imploringly.

"No more!" she cried. "The thought kills me."

No more, darling! But tell me, this man, this officer who came last night—he returns?"

"Yes. To-day."

"And I must see him?"

"There is no alternative."

"No"—she reflected a moment—"None, none. I must see him, I must tell him all. Arthur must be saved or he must perish by my lips. Oh, it is hard! It is very, very hard!"

There was an incoherence in these words to Ada, which alarmed her. She feared lest grief, and a sense of shame, combined with this fresh appeal to her fortitude, was telling upon her sister's brain. With gentle love and tenderness she strove to soothe and console her, and the morning was advanced—the gray dawn had given place to the struggling sunlight—before she quitted the apartment.

They parted with a tender embrace, Constance again and again clinging about her sister's neck with passionate warmth and affection, while her fervid "God bless you!" rang in her ears as she went.

Directly the door closed Constance sprang from her couch, and hurriedly assumed the garments which she had thrown off on the preceding night.

Her cheeks were flushed, and there was an unnatural compression of the lips as she proceeded. A sudden revulsion possessed her. Desperation dictated a line of conduct from which in a calmer moment her timid nature would have shrunk in alarm.

"This determines me," she burst out, unconsciously speaking aloud. "My path is clear. I must go, I must quit the dear home which my presence pollutes. I can remain here only as an instrument of evil. The finger of calumny points at me; high and low regard me as a fallen, a degraded creature. Even those near me in blood shrink from me, and from those I have loved in my fall. Mother—sister—you shall be spared this shame, this disgrace!"

She paused; tears were in her eyes and choked her utterance. Her bosom heaved with convulsive throbs.

"Yes—the way is clear, quite clear," she resumed at length.

"Were I gone there would be no obstacle to Hamnet's love for Ada. As it is, I stand between them. She has surprised the secret of my heart. She knows how fondly, how devotedly I love him, and her generous nature shields from me the pain which my encouragement of his advances would inflict on me. I know it. I have watched it day by day. She is sacrificing herself, and sacrificing Hamnet who loves her, for my sake. And shall I be less generous? Shall I for ever thrust my hopeless love between them and happiness?"

It was easy to ask that question, but, oh, the happiness of a life hung on the answer, and if she paused, sick and faint ere she uttered it, it was because she was a woman, not a heroine—a gentle loving, suffering, heart-broken woman.

"My duty is—no, no." That was her resolve. "I might stay to disgrace and injure those I love; but I

dare not utter the words that may confound innocence and guilt, and involve them in one common fate. If I should remain to answer the questionings of the man who comes here to-day, heaven alone knows the wrong that I might do. I might seal Arthur's doom, or saving him, I might condemn one who, whatever his failings, may be guiltless of blood. I cannot tell. At least it is not for my voice to denounce him. And unless I take this step, how can I help myself? A hard, relentless fate drives me from my home, and from those whose love has made the happiness of my life. It is cruel, cruel, but inevitable. It must be."

That was her decision. Or rather it was the decision she was compelled to accept.

The relentless logic of circumstances drove her to adopt a step which her instinct told her was rash and perilous, but which seemed inevitable.

Even while she argued out the case as against herself, she hesitated, as one pursued by savage denizens of the forest might hesitate at leaping into a yawning abyss.

But that hesitation was not for long.

Her decision had been made.

In these simple words "it must be," she had sealed her own doom, and plunged into the gulf of the awful, but unknown future.

When, later in the morning, Ada Lomax stole on tiptoe to her sister's door, and listened in hope that she might have sunk into a gentle slumber, no sound met her ear. She softly opened the door, and peeped in. The bed was deserted; the room was empty. On the dressing table lay a note addressed to herself in a hurried and unsteady hand. The envelope contained a sheet of note-paper covered with writing, and a second envelope, with the name of her mother upon it. Before she had read a word, Ada turned deadly pale, and the paper trembled in her hand.

She had a presentiment of what had happened.

CHAPTER XXVII

VERIFYING A SUSPICION.

He is a bold and reckless gentleman,
Fearing nor man nor devil: what he will
He will—and so no more ado.

German Play.

A DARK, inclement night succeeded the short winter day.

It wanted a few minutes of one, and the repose which had been for an hour past creeping over the metropolis, began to be felt in that choice locality—Poulter's Rents.

The Rents was a late place.

Its inhabitants "took no note of time" as regulating their movements; but were in and out at all hours of the day and night, just as it suited them. What regularity there was in their movements resulted pretty much from the regularity attending those of the Poulter's Arms, and the public-houses generally. Such a thing as a clock was unknown in the Rents, and a watch only came there at long intervals, and then only remained there until it could safely be shuffled out of sight. But everybody knew that when the Arms opened in the morning it was breakfast time, and when it closed at night it was time for bed—seeing that there was no more drink to be got that night. And this was about all the Rentsers knew, or wanted to know, of time.

About one o'clock peace began to descend on the Rents, and the miserable court was given up to the lines of drying garments, which were never removed, and which had a half-human and ghostly aspect in the feeble and uncertain light.

At the upper end of the Rents, farthest from the low arch by which the place was entered, dwelt the man who was called Rowdy Cooter—the father of Madge.

The house was a wretched hole, in the last stage of hopeless dilapidation. Only a great bulk of timber—itsself black and rotting with the years it had acted as a prop—prevented its coming down about the ears of those who inhabited it. The roof was leaky, the walls bulged, the windows were all askew, the doorway had warped out of all relation to the door, and so throughout; nothing about it was as it should be, nothing about it had ever been so, for that matter, since the days that the scamping builders, working under contract, declared it finished.

Yet each of the twelve rooms in this house, herded its separate family.

The Cooters were the fortunate holders of the ground floor. On this night a dim light illuminated that room, partly concealed by a patchwork curtain hanging at the window.

It was only the light of a fire, burning in a rickety, unfixed grate, with a good many loose bricks about it, —two under each leg to keep it from falling forward; four or five arranged in front to constitute a fender, and two in the grate itself, which, never large, was thus rendered so narrow that it presented to view a mere slice or streak of fire.

Over this a man crouched eagerly, amusing himself by picking cinders from a basket on his right, and dropping them into the red embers one by one.

In this way he at length obtained a cheerful flicker, enough to reveal himself, and the place in which he sat.

For the place, it was of the poorest description, with yellow-washed walls, a sodden brick floor, and no furniture to speak of beyond a bed in a far corner, covered with patchwork, like the curtain at the window, a sort of carpenter's bench by way of table, two chairs, and a three-legged stool, worn with years of hard use.

As for the man, his face bore a striking resemblance to that of Madge Cooter. The features were as good, the eyes as fiery and restless, and there was the sullen, defiant expression about it which spoilt the girl's beauty, and made the man utterly repulsive. A tangled mass of hair, like oakum, which concealed his forehead, gave him a villainous aspect. Nor was his attire prepossessing. He had on an old weather-stained monkey-jacket, open in front, and disclosing a ragged blue shirt, with a suspicion of blood on it—not unusual in that fighting locality—and his trousers were old and patched. He had kicked off a pair of clumsy ankle-jacks, and was sitting bare-footed.

Such was Rowdy Cooter in private life.

Pausing in the act of showering a handful of dust on the flames, and watching the sparkles, he abruptly raised his head and listened.

"Hear anything?" he whispered turning towards the bed.

There was a faint rustle of the patchwork quilt, and then a feeble voice answered.

"No, John," it said.

"Lay snug," Cooter whispered. "Somebody on the prowl."

The occupant of the bed did not seem to breathe.

The man, too, held his breath and listened intently, and with the cunning and patience of an animal rather than a man.

Presently his sagacity was rewarded.

There was a distinct footstep.

Then, with a movement as noiseless as that of a tiger, the fellow bent his lithe body till he could reach a short thick bar of iron, which had been used as a poker, and lay on the ground. This he picked up, and dexterously passed into the pocket of his coat.

Having secured this weapon, he took a step or two towards the door, his bare feet making no noise on the brick flooring, and waited, his head thrust forward, his eyes lurid, his teeth firmly set.

On a sudden the door sprang open, and the face of a tall man was just visible in the fire light.

"Who are you?" growled Cooter.

"All right, Cooter, all right," said the intruder, briskly. "Not a policeman—not a detective—nobody from Canterbury."

"Canterbury?"

As Cooter echoed that word, he grasped the iron bar in his pocket, furtively, and his face assumed a fiendish expression.

"You're cool," he said, "deuced cool, coming into a feller's place, without yer leaf or by yer leaf, and talking a pack o' stuff about peelers and sneaks and—where was it?"

"Where you've just come from, my excitable friend," remarked the other, advancing a step or two. "No, no, no! don't fly out in that way. Be calm, be collected; let's close the door and get to business, at once—I say, at once."

"And what I see is this," returned Cooter, not moving an inch, and still keeping his hand suspiciously in his pocket, "If you don't hook it out o' my place, whoever you be, out you go, neck and crop. Come!"

But the stranger was not at all alarmed.

"A moment, my friend," he replied, "You and I have met before. Oh, yes we have. Fact. You don't believe it; but I'll convince you of it to your satisfaction in a moment. You may recollect—really I think we'd better shut the door."

"No."

"Well, as you like, just as you like. I was saying you might recollect a little affair about a stolen portrait-locket? You do? I see you do?"

His manner had, indeed, suddenly changed.

"Well—what of it?" he growled.

"Nothing, only that I stood your friend in that matter. I squared the police. It was I who prevented a prosecution, and you know what that would have meant for you. It would have meant penal servitude for you, my boy."

A faint groan came from the bed hidden in the gloom.

"What was that?" demanded the stranger, startled.

"Nothing. Rats. Come in, and shut that door."

This was Cooter's gracious form of invitation. The other, who evidently had his motive for coming there, obeyed with alacrity, closed the door, and walked towards the fire. Cooter kicked the three-

legged stool towards him, and, availing himself of it, the stranger promptly sat down, and contemplated his companion to as great an extent as was possible, seeing that he stood with his back to the handful of fire.

"There are men who would think this a rash step on my part," the intruder began.

"Gilt on," interrupted the other.

"I believe I am getting on," was the reply. "I am saying that there are those who would accuse me of rashness in venturing here alone, at night, and for the purpose for which I come. Rash! Yes, that's the word, but I'm used to that. I suppose I am rash. But of this I'm certain—I risk nothing in coming to you?"

He put it as a question, and paused; but the fellow designed no reply.

"And now to the point," he resumed. "You have done work—your sort of work—for an Italian nobleman, the Count Rosario?"

Cooter, leaning his back against the mantel-piece, sprang up.

"No," he said.

"Nay, my dear sir—"

"It's false!" vociferated Cooter.

"Oh, man, man!" cried the stranger, shaking his head, "how shall we be able to get on if you will admit nothing?"

"I will admit nothing," was the fierce retort.

"Very good. We shall see. Let us say you were not engaged by the Count Rosario, or those about him? Let us say that it was of your own accord that you hounded a young fellow who was drunk enough to follow you into this court, believing it a short cut home, and that you, of your own accord, bribed a recruiting-sergeant—an old prison comrade of yours—to swear that he had taken the Queen's shilling. Shall we say this?"

Though Cooter's back was to the fire, which, left untended, was gradually burning low, it was possible to see that a scowl distorted his hard features, as he growled:

"I've said as I admits nothin', and denies nothin'. And I'll stick to that."

"Oh, that you stick to?"

"Yes."

"You decline to say whether it was on the Count's behalf or your own that you next hunted up Leonard Havering—Why do you start?"

"Start! What d'ye mean?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing. Only you didn't seem to like the name, that's all. Sensitive nature, I daresay—affected at the mention of murdered men's names. And so you decline to say how it was that you were hurrying towards Havering's house on the night of the great fog—when you picked the pocket, you know—"

"Curse you!" interrupted Cooter, fiercely, and half-drawing the iron bar from his pocket. "What right has you to come into a cove's house, and blaguard him as you've been a-doin'? Get out with you! Hook it, I say, or as safe as my name's—"

"Cooter? Exactly. I'm not alarmed, Cooter. And if you'll let me finish and then reply—"

"Never."

"As you please; but I must finish. We've got to Havering's house, and now for our next step. Our next step is—Canterbury. You shouldn't start. Bad habit, I assure you. We get to Canterbury, and there we are, with one eye on our hounded young friend, and the other on Havering. What happened there we know right well; Havering dies, and our hounded young friend is arrested on suspicion of his death. But the great question still remains? We, Cooter, decline to say why we were on the spot; why we left it and went further afield till it was safe to steal back to London, and why our daughter, Madge, does not tell the coroner a word about our being near the place?"

Again, at the mention of Madge's name, there came a groan from the direction of the bed.

"We interrupt some one?" asked the stranger.

"Yes," shouted Cooter, with an imprecation. "You interrupt me. It's all false, from end to end. And as for you, why, you must be a born fool to come here thinking I'm goin' to criminate myself, and get myself into hot water all along of my own tongue. 'Taint likely."

"No," said the other, placidly, "taint. I didn't think it would be. I assure you that I had not the least idea of getting anything from you; but came here prepared to be satisfied with what I didn't get."

"With what you didn't get?"

"Exactly. Cooter, I argued with myself, is a clever man. He's a sagacious, knowing fellow, is Cooter. He will admit nothing—until he sees that, by admitting nothing, he puts himself in a worse position than if he had made a clean breast of it."

"Hang me if I understand—" Cooter was bursting out.

The other put up his hands to motion him to silence.

"Just what I say!" he exclaimed. "You don't! But you will! When an honest man is accused of suspicious conduct, he resents the accusation, and says: 'All that I do is fair, square, and above board, and I'm prepared to explain and justify my conduct in every particular.' That's what an honest and innocent man says. But a rogue—a guilty man, answers very differently. His answer is: 'I'm not going to get myself into hot water through my own tongue.'"

"He sees that, does he?" shouted Cooter, greatly exasperated. "He uses my words, does he? Making me out to be a rogue and a guilty man, I s'pose?"

"Well, I'm afraid that's what it comes to. I'm afraid that my suspicions are justified, and that I shall leave this place—"

"No!"

As he shouted out the word, the half-savage strode across from the fireplace to the door and placed his broad back against it.

"You mean that I shall not leave this place?" said the stranger, rising.

"That's about the size of it," was the sullen answer.

"You have a disused well under the bricks of your backyard, haven't you?"

"We ave." His eyes flamed as he answered.

"You have also a communication by means of a trap with a sewer flowing under the house?"

"Yes." His glance grew still fiercer.

"I thought so. You were kind enough to mention the fact in the hearing of the police. I have a note of it: so have they. As I was saying, I'm afraid I shall have to leave this place with my worst suspicions justified,—that you and your employer know more of this Canterbury affair than anybody else. Now, open that door."

"Never!"

The right hand of the speaker, which had temporarily strayed from the coat-pocket found its way back again.

"You'd best," said the other, "it'll save me the trouble, and you too."

"I d'essay," sneered Cooter.

"Hark you, Bowdy," cried the other, a little excited for the first time during the interview, "when I came here, I knew I should meet a coward. So you see I was quite safe in coming. Yes—I repeat—quite—safe—in coming. And as my reception has confirmed my worst fears, I've stayed long enough. Stand aside!"

But Cooter did not move.

"Let me out, I say."

The answer came in a gruff, savage whisper:

"Not alive!"

It had hardly passed the fellow's lips before the stranger had seized him by the collar and was in the act of swinging him round toward the fire. But Cooter was strong and desperate, and in an instant the iron bar was out, was waving aloft, and had descended. Fortunately, the intended victim had his hat on, and that broke the violence of the blow. Still he dropped his hands and staggered back. Cooter, with the savage instincts of a dog, followed up his advantage. Reckless of consequences, he again raised his weapon—a fearful one in those brawny hands—and it would have descended fully on the face of the intruding stranger, had not a fearful shriek caused him to pause, and look round.

It proceeded from the bed, where the face of a woman, and an upraised, imploring hand, were faintly seen.

"No murder! No more murder, John!" cried the feeble voice which had before spoken.

"Silence!" shrieked Cooter, making a spring toward her.

But before he could reach the bed she had answered him.

In low and distinct tones she had said:

"Lay a hand on me, and I'll tell all."

The words were simple; but they had their effect. Cowed by them, the savage threw his missile toward the grate, and turning with suppressed fury to his unwelcome visitor, bade him begone.

Half-stunned, the other muttered some defiant words, and passed out of the room and the house into the night. The Rents was as quiet as a graveyard, and as deserted. As he staggered over the broken paving, the man put his hand to his head and looked about in bewilderment.

"Jack, my boy," he muttered, "Jack Thorn, my boy, you've got a knock you didn't bargain for."

It might have been only the echo of his own words, but he looked back sharply, fancying he heard a sound, and fearing pursuit.

(To be continued.)

QUEEN'S SHIPS.—The usual annual return made by the controller of the Navy shows that, on the 1st of February, there were in the royal navy 445 steamships afloat, 357 of them screws, and 26 screw steamers building; there were also 69 effective sailing ships afloat, 54 of them mortar vessels and floats. These

numbers make 540 in all. Of the steam vessels afloat, 27 are armour-plated screw ships—namely, 3 third-rate iron ships and 6 wood, two fourth-rate iron ships and one wood; four cupola ships, fourth rate; one wood corvette, sixth rate; two sloops, three iron floating batteries, and two of wood. There are 55 ships of the line, screws; and 43 frigates, 37 of them screws. There are also 37 gun vessels and 103 gunboats, all screws. The rest are block ships, corvettes, sloops, mortar-ships, small vessels, tenders, &c. Of the 26 steam-ships building, 8 are armour-plated—namely, 3 third-rate iron ships, and 1 of wood; 1 wood corvette, sixth-rate; and 3 iron gunboats. Of the other 18 steam vessels building, the building of 12 is suspended and only a frigate, 3 sloops, and 2 gunboats, all screws, are proceeding. The return of the 1st of February, 1864, showed 592 vessels afloat, and 38 building. There are seven more armour-plated vessels afloat now than there were then, but fewer paddle-ships, fewer gunboats, and fewer sailing ships.

THE LOVE OF A LIFE.

THE soft sunshine of an April day was fitfully lighting up the turrets of an ancient castle that stood on the green banks of the beautiful Rhone. It was, indeed, a "stately hall, with its donjon keep and moated wall," this half ruined palace of the Talafiero. Here dwelt, in sadness and seclusion, Blanche Talafiero.

A remnant of a long line of vassals that had served the family for ages past still lingered around their young mistress, who, bereft of all her relatives, had only these faithful adherents of better days to share her altered fortunes.

In the days of her earlier youth, when father, brother and friends remained to her, Blanche was sought by more than one gallant knight. As she was the last of the family, so, also, was she the most beautiful, if the long picture gallery told the truth. Not a face there, save hers, that would seem likely to enchant the hearts of men. Not one in all that array of female ancestors that even resembled the beautiful Blanche.

Her golden locks and soft blue eyes were an inheritance from her English mother, for the last Talafiero had wandered far and wide, and had at last brought a wife from merry England.

The fair girl had faded and drooped in that stately castle, pining for the green fields and sunny streams of her native land; and when she had looked upon her youngest and fairest child, she meekly gave up her own young life. The eldest, a son, lived to manhood, but lost his life soon after in one of the petty wars in which two provinces were contending for a small principality.

Some months after this, the father was shot, while riding near some woods. No one ever knew whether it was by design or accident. He was found dead, from a deep wound in the heart. Blanche had been wooed by many of the neighbouring lords; but her affections were in the keeping of a young nobleman, Gaston Montani, whose attentions had excited the wrath of her father and brother. Their deaths set her free; but her lover was far away on the plains of Syria, with the Red Cross Knights.

Before he left home, he had sent her his portrait—a full-length picture, clad in the garb of the Knights of the Red Cross. This she had succeeded in concealing in her oratory, where no one but herself ever entered. After her father's death, Blanche had it removed to the inhabited part of the castle, where she could gaze upon it undisturbed.

Then came the dreary hours in the girl's life. Year by year went by, and still he came not. She had long ago given up all society; she lived but upon the one idea of Gaston's return. Her present life was the one long, dark winter; his coming was to unfold the glad beauty of the spring. Sometimes, as she walked, "sad, solemn, thoughtful," by the Rhone's green banks, she would fancy that she heard the tramp of returning armies, and could see the waving of his plume afar off. Then, wearied and disappointed, she would return to her dull, monotonous life—sleeping, dreaming, wondering if he would ever come, and weeping when the thought arose that he might not.

It was singular, that, although she saw her own face whiter and paler, as the years went on—although she felt her eyes grow dim with age, and saw the hard blue veins show themselves in her once fair hands—she never dreamed that her lover could be subject to the same influences.

To her, he was ever the youthful knight whose handsome features looked forth from the canvas, with the love of a faithful heart beaming out sweetly upon her.

Her servants, too—young, bright, cheerful men and women at the time her father died, were now grey-haired and bent with age.

Even this did not teach her how altered must be the face and figure of Gaston upon the plains of Syria.

One incident occurred, after many years, to break up the monotony of her life. Some English travellers went up their names one morning, with a petition to be allowed to behold the Rhone from the battlements of the castle. And in that list of English names, she recognized one the same as that of her mother.

That morning, she almost forgot to gaze on Gaston's portrait.

A fair young girl, bearing her mother's name—Margaret Russell—and wearing a look so like the little miniature that had always lain near her heart, attracted her to ask questions; and then she learned that the girl's mother had often told her of a beautiful relative of her own who had been carried off to the banks of the Rhone, married and died.

There was a warm welcome in the heart and on the lips of Blanche. The girl was an orphan, alone and dependent; and was easily persuaded to stay at the picturesque old castle, so much admired by the whole party. She was, therefore, left behind; and Blanche found a new joy in preparing rooms for the new "cousin," and sitting them up with every luxury. Now there would be some one to talk with, of Gaston—some one to watch his coming, and help her prepare for that wedding which was such a sweet delusion to the faithful-hearted Blanche. They became inseparable friends—Blanche never seeming to think herself older than the young girl herself.

It was some months after her coming, that she entered Blanche's chamber one morning, and besought her to rise and dress herself quietly, for some one had arrived with a message for her. Trembling in every limb, the poor old woman suffered her "cousin" to robe her, until she came to the last garment.

"Not that morning-dress, dear Margaret! Bring me the white lace robe that hangs in the wardrobe. Perhaps it is Gaston!"

And in spite of all Margaret could say, she put on the lace robe, and had some white flowers placed in her hair, now nearly as white as they. When she descended to the hall, she was met by a noble-looking man, seemingly about seventy years of age. His hair was still profuse, but quite grey, and his face showed the scars of battle wounds. The stranger was trembling too; and in an agitated voice he announced that he was from Syria.

"Then you must have seen Gaston!" exclaimed Blanche, going up to him, and placing her withered hands upon his shoulders. "That is he!" she added, directing his glance to the portrait. "Tell me, sir, if he lives?"

"I know him well," he answered, "and am commissioned to ask first if Lady Blanche is faithful to her love. Otherwise, I can speak of him no more."

"Say on!" she cried, impatiently, "and believe that I could never change while that picture hangs there before my eyes. Tell me, I implore you!"

"I will go your bidding, lady. Gaston lives—is faithful; but, on one point, he still fears to return. He bade me say to his lady-love that his heart is the same, but that he has grown old and shattered in time, and bears a scarred and wrinkled brow, and that you will hardly recognize the young warrior who led you in the heyday of his youth."

"Go away!" she exclaimed. "You have not seen Gaston! Think you that he whom you describe is like yonder glorious being? I will not believe you! Gaston will come to me like that! You are an impostor!"

"Hush, dear Lady Blanche!" said Margaret's sweet voice. "Do you not remember how the hardships and privations of war must have altered that beautiful face—how the sun and wind must have darkened his hair, and—"

"Cease, Margaret! You and this unworthy stranger must have conspired to drive me mad."

"Oh, heaven!" came from the white lips of the stranger, "help me to make this last appeal! Lady," he continued, "your lover has suffered sorely in mind and body; but, through all, he has been true and faithful. Bright eyes have shone upon him, and graceful beings have sought for his love; but to all he has said that there was one whom alone he loved, waiting and watching here. He knew that long years would change them both, but he believed in her so truly that he knew her heart would be the same for ever."

Blanche had fallen forward upon the table by which she sat, and seemed unconscious that the stranger had risen. Margaret glanced at him, and then at the picture. A thought came to her, and when he went away, she followed him. In the hall, she said to him, "You are the lover she waits for. Go back and tell her so. She does not dream that you are he—but she will awaken to the consciousness that you are so, if you will but allow her to know you as you are."

"And you—a stranger—know me, and she did not!"

"True, she did not recognize you—while I, who

never saw you, traced the resemblance to that picture, which she has gazed on so long that she cannot separate you from that glowing canvas. Go back, and tell her that you are Gaston himself."

He did so, but without success. She would not be convinced; and Margaret, weeping with regret and vexation, saw him walk away beneath the trees. He was gone for ever!

In that grim old castle, where the Alpine shadows fell heavily, two women sat long years, in solemn vigil for the Red Cross Knight. It was the fancy of Lady Blanche that Margaret should watch with her. The former still wore her gay-coloured garments, unconscious that they hung loosely upon her, and that the jewels dropped from her shrunken fingers.

Sometimes, when the warm firelight glowed brightly upon the portrait, she would say, "He will come tonight, I think, dear Margaret. Bid them light the great lamp above the gateway, and let the maids warm up the blue—no, the red chamber, for his sleeping-room. Haste dear, and call Paulo and the girls!"

Alas! poor Paulo had died of old age many years before, and "the girls" were out their lives in vain preparations for the coming of Lady Blanche's lover.

Poor, good, patient Margaret!

Her youth was spent beside her, unmurmuringly; and when, at last, the long tried heart carried its burden to the grave, she mourned her with the true and sincere grief of a heart that feels only its own loss, and its own loneliness.

On a distant shore there stood a cross of crimson hue. Long years ago that cross was planted there; and, only that it was tended by careful hands, the long grass would have obscured it from mortal view. But every day at twilight, an aged man, in the costume of the Red Cross Knights, came out from the ancient and honoured building where the Templars held their councils, and, as he walked by the grave, he cast upon it a spray of crimson flowers and a bunch of evergreen.

No sound of prayer or benediction came from those lips.

Even when the passer-by asked him who lay there, tended with such loving solicitude, he only pointed to a stone beneath the cross; and the stranger, pushing away the tangled weeds, beheld inscribed on its base, in quaint old letters:

"GASTON MONTANI." R. F.

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c. &c.

CHAPTER CXVIII.

AMY PAYS HER CREDITORS.

The night is mother of the day,
The winter of the spring;
And ever upon old decay
The greenest mosses cling.
Behind the cloud the starlight lurks;
Through showers the sunbeams fall;
For God, who loveth all his works,
Hath left his Hope with all.

Whittier.

EARLY the next morning active preparations were commenced for the removal.

Amy was obliged to confine herself to her sewing and to the care of the two children.

But Nancy went vigorously to work to wash up everything that could be washed in the house, so that all that was to be left behind, and all that was to be carried away, should be clean.

And Owen set to upon the shop, and took down and dusted every pot and jar, and gave all a thorough renovating to make it more attractive to the young doctor, who might be the purchaser of the stock. And in the evening they gathered around the one candle, Amy sewing, Nancy ironing, and Owen polishing the metal tops of the jars, and all discussing hopefully the new home.

And the next day passed very much in the same manner.

And in the evening of the third day their preparations were nearly concluded—so nearly that they were all as usual sitting around the candle, and not as usual, resting from their labours, when there came a ring at the shop-door bell.

Owen went out to answer it, and returned ushering in Mr. Miller.

"Good evening, Mrs. Wynne. I have a letter here from young Doctor Meadows. He writes that he thinks he may take the stock and fixtures off your hands, if they are in good condition and you will let him have them at a reasonable rate," he said, as he shook hands with Amy.

"Oh, thank you, sir, very much! Indeed I will. He shall have everything at his own valuation. The medicines are quite fresh, for medicines. My dear

lost husband selected them, not a year ago. And if Doctor Meadows will give me even so much as half what they cost, I shall be entirely satisfied," said Amy, eagerly.

"Oh, I dare say he will do that. Perhaps he might give you more. But, at a forced sale, you know, things must be sold at a great sacrifice. And my advice to you is, to take what you can for the stock and fixtures of the shop, because, in fact, you have but one possible purchaser, and, unless you sell them to him they will be a dead loss on your hands."

"I know that, sir. I shall follow your counsel, and I thank you very much for giving it."

"Not at all. But now another thing. What day shall I send the cart to take your goods and chattels to Forrest Lodge?"

"Any day you please, Mr. Miller. They are quite ready for removal."

"Then let it be on Saturday morning, as we first arranged."

"Certainly, if you please."

"I fancy Dr. Meadows will arrive to-night or to-morrow night. If so, he will pay you a visit before you go. If not, you can leave the shop just as it stands for his inspection. I believe that is all I have to say for the present. Good evening, Mrs. Wynne."

And, with a bow, the landlord went away.

Amy had scarcely finished breakfast the next morning when she was startled by a visit from the young doctor.

He had arrived the night before, and he had come this morning to inspect the shop, and possibly to make an offer for it as it stood.

He was a tall, thin, spectral-looking young man, whose appearance of ill-health naturally tempted the beholder to advise him.

"Physician, heal thyself."

With the permission of Mrs. Wynne, he entered upon a careful examination of the medicine, and also of the books.

This investigation occupied him about four hours, at the end of which time he came into the little back parlour, where Amy sat sewing beside the cradle of the children, and said:

"Mrs. Wynne, I understand the stock and fixtures of this shop cost the late Doctor Wynne about one hundred and fifty pounds?"

"Yes, sir, about that."

"I find that very little of the stock has been disposed of, and that what remains is in a very excellent condition."

"I think you are right, sir."

"I am willing, therefore, to pay you one hundred pounds for it as it stands."

Amy fairly sprang at this offer. She could not conceal her surprise and delight. They were beaming from every feature of her face.

"That is very liberal indeed, sir," she said.

"It is more, perhaps, than another would offer; but I like to be fair. I will pay you half down at once; and fifty pounds more at the end of six months. Will that be satisfactory?"

"Perfectly so."

"Then we will conclude this business at once," said Doctor Meadows, taking out his pocket-book, and selecting from it two notes, which he handed over to Amy.

"I thank you, sir! I thank you very much indeed," said Amy, earnestly, for she almost felt as if this unexpected money was a donation.

Owen ran into the shop and brought writing materials. And Amy wrote an acknowledgment of the money. And Doctor Meadows gave her his note for the balance due, payable in six months after date.

When these papers were exchanged between them, the young doctor arose and took leave of the widow.

As soon as he was gone, Amy sprang from her chair with joy irradiating her countenance. She had never in her whole life before had half so much money, or half so much need of it as now.

But it was not the money in itself as much as the use she was about to put it to that made her so happy.

"Oh, Owen, love!" she exclaimed, "now run and get your hat and cloak. We will go directly and pay our debts. Oh, thank heaven, thank heaven, that we can now settle with everybody, and they will know that we are honest."

As Owen scampered off to obey her, his mother flew up stairs, as fast as her failing breath would permit, to prepare herself for the walk.

She soon came down quite ready, and smiling with delight; and as Owen was waiting for her they set out.

It was a sunny winter's day, warm and brilliant for the season; and Amy felt so exhilarated by the new sense of freedom that the means of paying her debts had given her, that she almost ran along.

Her manner became sobered, however, as they drew near the establishment of Mr. Durkie, the un-

dertaker, for it was to that place they were going first.

Amy entered, and walked through the gloomy shop to the dark little back office, where Mr. Durkie sat alone, bending over some account books.

"Oh, Mr. Durkie! I have come to pay you the balance I have owed you so long, and to thank you for your kindness in trusting me so far. And, oh! I am so glad to have the money to give you at last!" she said, excitedly.

And without waiting for him to speak, she tremblingly opened her purse and took out one of the notes, and laid it before him.

Mr. Durkie, who had had no more expectation of getting that money than of falling heir to an earldom, looked up in bewilderment.

"Please give me the change and a receipt in full, Mr. Durkie, as I have several other places to call at, and a great deal more to do," said Amy, eagerly.

But Mr. Durkie looked from her to the note and scratched his head, as if he did not understand.

Amy impatiently tapped the note with her finger, as if to call his attention to it.

"What's this for?" he then inquired, taking it up.

"To pay you, Mr. Durkie."

"Oh—ah! But—is this quite convenient now, Mrs. Wynne?"

"Oh, quite—entirely! and I am so glad to have it to give you!"

"But I never pressed you for it."

"Oh, no, I know you did not. But my own conscience did."

Mr. Durkie scratched his head harder than before, slowly referred to his books, deliberately made out his account, receipted it in full, and handed it to Amy with the change of her note, saying:

"I thank you, Mrs. Wynne, and I shall be very happy to receive your orders on any future occasion when you may require my services."

"Heaven forbid!" gasped Amy, under her breath, as she raised her startled eyes to the face of the undertaker.

Poor Durkie had had no idea of shocking her. He had but used the tradesman's stereotyped form of thanks without considering the terror that underlaid his words.

But Amy soon forgot them.

When she was once more out in the sunny street, the exhilarating atmosphere, the cheerful scene, and the pleasant errand all combined to raise her spirits to that degree that she again walked on with the springing step and animated countenance of her happier days.

"Now I shall never be afraid to pass his door, or ashamed to look him in the face again, Owen, dear. Oh, what a bondage was my debt, and what freedom to be out of it. Ah, how delightful to be able to show the people who were so good as to trust us in our need that we were worthy of their confidence. And to walk freely through the streets of the village without holding my breath and hurrying past some houses; or crossing the street to avoid meeting some people; or dropping down my veil to keep from being recognized by others. Ah, Owen, what liberty this is! Oh, my dear boy, this is the most blessed day I have seen since your dear father went to Heaven!" she said, as she hurried along.

"I knew this day would come, mother. But I did not think it would come so soon," said Owen, as they stopped before the door of Mr. Lacy, to whom Amy still owed a very small balance for her mourning.

"I congratulate you, Mrs. Wynne," said Mr. Lacy, coming to meet her. "I hear that young Doctor Meadows has bought you out."

"Oh, yes, indeed. And the sum he gives me enables me to pay all my debts. Here is what I owe you, Mr. Lacy. Take it with my thanks for all your kindness," said Amy, laying the money before him.

"But—really now—I am not in any hurry, Mrs. Wynne. You may have other uses for this," said Lacy, hesitatingly.

"Oh, no, indeed I haven't. Oh, do take it. If you only knew what a pleasure it gives me to pay my debts! I used to be so much afraid I should never be able to pay them. But, thank Heaven, a way has been unexpectedly opened for me to do so!"

Mr. Lacy took the money and gave her a receipt in full. And Amy and her little son left the shop, and walked away towards the other end of the village, where was situated Mr. Spicer's large grocery.

As they drew near, they saw Mr. Spicer standing sunning himself at his front door.

It was now high noon, an hour at which the primitive inhabitants dined, and consequently it was not the hour at which customers "mostly did congregate" in Mr. Spicer's grocery. Amy was fortunate in finding him disengaged for the time being.

A tall, portly man, somewhat past middle age, with a full face, brown hair and eyes, and with a most kindly expression of countenance, was William Spicer. A self-made man, who had begun life by sweeping out

the shop, and making the fires in the very establishment of which he was now the head. A Christian man who carried his religion into his business, and did everything as a Christian should.

He smiled on Amy and her little son as he saw them approach; and he came forth a step to meet them, and held out his hand to welcome them.

"Oh, Mr. Spicer," began Amy, "I have not had an opportunity before, of thanking you for your great—"

"Come in," said Mr. Spicer, gently interrupting her expressions of gratitude by drawing her into the shop by the hand that he had taken.

"For your great kindness," continued Amy, "to me and my—"

"Sit down," said Mr. Spicer, dusting a chair and placing it for her accommodation.

"And my children," persisted Amy. "We shall never cease to be grateful, Mr. Spicer."

"Tut, tut, it is not worth mentioning."

"Indeed I do not know what ever we should have done this winter if it had not been for you."

"Nonsense my child!—my dear lady I should say."

"No it is not nonsense, Mr. Spicer. It was our salvation. If you could have seen me—"

Amy spoke out of the simple frankness and warm gratitude of her guileless heart—"if you could have seen me waiting for that basket every Monday evening, and blaming myself for having sent it at all; and yet fearing all the time that it might come home empty—you would understand how great was our need, and how much your kindness was to us. But the basket never did come home empty. As regularly, yes, and as graciously as came the daily sun to brighten our world, came that weekly basket to comfort us. It never, never failed us!"

While Amy spoke, the big grocer fidgetted and fidgetted, and finally sidled himself behind the counter, and began to make a feint of business by fumbling with the scales and weights.

"And do you think that we can ever forget such kindness, or esteem it lightly? Oh, no. But I did not come here only to speak these words, although I was obliged to utter them; they were swelling in my heart. But I come here not only to say, but to prove that I am not ungrateful for your kindness, or unworthy of your trust," said Amy, rising and going to the counter, where she opened her purse, took from it her remaining note and laid it before her creditor.

Mr. Spicer gently pushed it towards her.

Amy looked up at him in surprise, and took up the note and handed it to him.

"Put it up—put it up, my dear child—my good lady, I should say!" said Mr. Spicer.

"But, sir, I wish to settle my bill. Don't you understand that I do?"

"I—hem! I really do not know the amount of the bill, Mrs. Wynne. I have not made it out yet," said the grocer, in confusion.

"I do not care to have the items. If you will only let me know the sum total, I will settle it at once," persisted Amy.

"I—upon my word I do not know the sum total! Nor have I time now to examine the books. Some other time, my dear Mrs. Wynne. In fact, I wish you would allow the account to run on to the end of the year, dating from the time you began to deal with me."

"Mr. Spicer, you are very good, and I understand what you mean. But you are quite mistaken. I am really very well able to pay you now. I have sold out my stock this morning to the new doctor, who is going to settle here."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Spicer, as if he was glad to change the subject. "Sold out, have you? I hope you got good terms."

"Yes, very good," said Amy, and in the simple candour of her soul, she told him exactly what those terms were.

"Two-thirds of the original cost, and one-half down, and one-half at the end of six months. Pretty fair, I suppose, for a forced sale," said Mr. Spicer.

"And now you see, sir, how well able I am to pay you," said Amy.

"But—you had other liabilities."

"Oh, yes, but I have settled them! And see I have this left!" And with child-like confidence, she opened her purse and displayed its contents.

"Yes," said Mr. Spicer, thoughtfully. "And now, my dear Mrs. Wynne, I have a favour to ask of you. Would you grant me a favour if you could?"

"Yes, a thousand if I could!" said Amy, fervently.

"Well it is this: It would really inconvenience me very much to make out your account just now. Therefore, I must entreat you, as a favour, to let it run on for six months longer, until, in fact, that second fifty pounds that is owing to you, falls due. Then—if you insist upon it—you may pay the bill."

"Yes! I see through it all, Mr. Spicer. And I see your great kindness in it all. I see, also, that you are resolved to have your own way in the matter. And

so, I will agree to your plan, on condition that at the end of the time named, you will certainly receive your pay without demur.

"I will promise you to do so, provided, when the time comes, you still insist upon it," said Mr. Spicer. And with this compromise, they parted, mutually satisfied.

When Amy and Owen had left the shop, Mr. Spicer remained ruminating, with his head upon his hand and his elbow upon his desk.

"Yes, 'provided when the time comes, she still insists upon it,'" he thoughtfully repeated—"that will bring the first of August. Poor little thing! poor, poor little thing, how fragile she is. And it is just upon such slight creatures that the heaviest burden of life oftentimes fall. Why she is as much of a child as her own little son. More, indeed, for he is a manly little fellow for his age. Now what shall I do?"

"Let me have one of those sugar-cured hams, if you please, Spicer," said no less a person than the Rev. Mr. Morley, coming into the shop, and cutting short the meditations of the grocer by practically answering the question in an unexpected manner.

Mr. Spicer, still in a dream, waited on his customer, and then returned to his ruminations.

William Spicer was emphatically a good man. Honest and truthful in his dealings with his fellow-men. Kind and compassionate to all who needed sympathy and help. And especially so to the young widow, whom chance had brought to his acquaintance. Her sorrows, her helplessness, her beauty, and more than all, the innocent frankness and fervour of her nature, all powerfully attracted the big grocer, and filled his honest heart with the purest sentiments of pity and admiration.

But what he should do with all this sympathy he hardly knew. He wished to do her good, but how? He would have been delighted to make her comfortable and happy, but in what manner? If she had been his widowed daughter, now, or his young sister, he might have been as good to her as he wished to be.

And it would have been the greatest pleasure of his life to have cherished her life, and entered for her until she grew strong and well.

He thought of the rich port wine, and the luscious meats, and rare delicacies with which he would have nourished her strength—for the big grocer, without being the least bit of a glutton, was a good feeder himself, and had a saving faith in food and drink, and a holy horror of physis.

He thought of the warm furs and velvets that he would have wrapped her in—had she been his widowed daughter, you know! And he thought how pretty she was even with her thin cheeks, and in her rusty black dress; and how very, very pretty she would be if she were well and becomingly dressed; and what a pleasure it would be to see her smile—and when he came to this point, he said—"Bother!" and began to turn over the leaves of his day-book as if he were bent upon business.

His young shopman returned from his dinner. And seeing his employer apparently busied in account-books, made himself very busy waiting on the customers, who now began to come in.

But Mr. Spicer was thinking only of Amy—her beauty, her patience, her artless candour and innocent fervour; and last, but not least, her great need of every sort which had taken such possession of the honest grocer's soul that he could not have shaken them off even if he had been inclined to do so. Then came the ever-recurring question. What could he do to help her? What, indeed, would she let him do?

He had filled her little basket every Monday, making its contents a free gift, under the veil of filling her order.

He had always given her full weight and overflowing measure of everything that she ordered, and he had never charged them on his books.

He would have been glad if she had ordered more than that small quantity a week; but she never did. He would have been glad to have sent her more upon his own responsibility; but he was afraid that she would detect the gifts under their disguises of sales, and that she might consider them as alms, and feel wounded; and, in her pride or delicacy, cease to send for the provisions, and thus suffer want. That was the reason Mr. Spicer never sent more than the things she ordered each week; but all in heavy weight and overflowing measure. He was very glad when the Christmas holidays gave him the privilege of sending her a gift.

But now she wanted to pay him. He had put her off for the present; but how should he manage to do so for the future? and, in the meantime, what could he do to make her more comfortable and happy? He looked around his large shop—almost a warehouse, it might be called—piled from cellar to roof with pipes and butts, hogsheds and barrels, chests and boxes, pots and jars, all filled with family provisions of every description, and he sighed with a feeling of pain and

companion to think that he had so much and she so little.

"Way, I might send every week enough of the very best in this house to keep her poor, little family, not only in the necessities, but in the comforts and luxuries of the table, and never even miss it! Miss it! I shouldn't miss ten times as much! I have such superfluity and she such need! Ah! these inequalities must be equalized somewhere, some time, in this world or the next, now or in the future!

CHAPTER CXXIX.

OWEN'S PLAN.

So in those winters of the soul,
By bitter blasts and dross,
O'er swept from memory's frozen pole,
Will sunny days appear,
Reviving hope and faith they show
The soul its living powers,
And how beneath the winter's snow
Lie germs of summer flowers.

Whittier.

WHEN Mr. Spicer ruminated over the best way of helping Amy against her will and without her knowledge, the young mother and her little son walked homewards—Amy with a satisfied and happy countenance, and Owen with a thoughtful brow and downcast eyes.

"What is my little lad thinking of?" inquired his mother.

"Of a plan—for beginning to make our living and perhaps our fortune," answered the boy, slowly.

"Our fortune, Owen dear?" repeated Amy, with a smile.

"Yes, mother. How much money have you got left?"

"Twenty-five pounds."

"Well, then, mother, don't let us spend it all; let us invest a part of it."

"Invest a part of it?" echoed Amy, turning around and gazing into the face of her little son with as much amazement as though his childish lips had just proposed a plan for paying the national debt.

"Why, Owen, dear, what do you know about investments? You can scarcely be supposed to know the meaning of the word."

"Oh! don't I know it neither, mother? You better believe I do, mother dear! I haven't been minding our shop, and running in and out of Mr. Lacy's and asking him questions about business for nothing! And I have thought about it a great deal, mother dear."

"Well, now tell me what you mean by investing money."

"Why, doing something with it to make it bring more money, mother. I have found out this much by talking to Mr. Lacy, that there are two ways of making money—one is by work and the other is by trade; and trade requires capital. Now, mother dear, if you will give the capital, I'll give the work, and we will begin to make our fortunes."

Amy stopped short in the street and gazed at her little son. And then she spoke indulgently, as though answering the boy's whim, and said:

"Well, Owen, if you had a little 'capital,' as you call it, what would you do with it?"

"Oh, mother dear, I know! I thought it all out, last night as I lay on my bed. I said to myself, if you only had twenty pounds to spare after paying your debts, what I could do with it."

"What, Owen?"

"Well, I will tell you, mother. You know Mr. Lacy is going to London to buy his spring goods. And I thought if I had the money I would ask him to take it with him, and when he bought his own goods to buy me some and bring them home. And then I could make up a pack and go through the country selling them. And I should make a great deal of money that way, I know I should."

"Turn peddler, Owen?" said Amy, with a smile.

"Yes, mother dear, to begin with."

"You are not strong enough to carry a pack."

"It need not be a big one at first, mother. And then, you know, I shall grow stronger every day."

This point of the conversation brought them to the market shop. And Amy went in to buy something for dinner.

And then they walked home.

But Owen would not give up his plan. His heart was so set upon commencing life as a trader. After dinner, when Amy was sitting in her low chair between the emble and the work-stand, sewing busily, Owen renewed the subject.

"Oh, mother dear, if you only know how much I want to go into it! I feel so sure I could make money."

"Don't think so much about money, my little son."

"Oh, mother, how can I help it, when you want so many things it would get; and the two poor little girls, too! It is not for myself I wish to make it."

"I know it, my dear, unselfish boy—I know it well."

"Then you'll let me try to make it, mother dear."

"I don't know, Owen."

"Look here!" said Nancy, who was busily engaged in taking from the cupboard all the crockery ware that was not in immediate use, and packing it into a case preparatory to the removal—"Don't you go giving that boy money to fling away—don't!"

"Oh, mother dear, don't listen to Nancy! She is very good, but she don't know anything about business, and I do."

"You! Oh, my! what a man you must think yourself, to be sure."

"No, Nancy, not a man—only a little boy; but still, I know what I am talking about. Mother dear, I should not lose your money; I should increase it. Do let me, mother!"

Amy turned again and gazed at her boy—at the large, well-shaped forehead, the clear, bright eyes, the firm, sweet mouth—and she felt that there was intelligence, self-reliance, and singleness of purpose, that sooner or later must ensure success in whatever he might undertake.

"Owen, love," she said, "you may take your hat, and run over to Mr. Lacy's, and ask him to come over here as soon as he has closed his shop. I will talk this matter over with him. If he thinks well of it, I will agree to your plan. For you know, dear, he has much more experience than you or I."

So Amy depend upon it that Owen lost no time. He hurried over to Mr. Lacy's shop, and delivered his message.

Not content with that, he waited until the customers with whom Mr. Lacy was engaged had left the shop, and then he opened the whole subject of his visit.

Mr. Lacy listened to Owen's scheme with more favour than the boy had expected; and he promised to go over to Mrs. Wynne as soon as he should close his shop.

Owen went home full of hope.

And that same evening, while Amy was still sewing by the light of the solitary candle, Mr. Lacy came in. Amy, half ashamed of what she feared her little son's boyish presumption, told Mr. Lacy of Owen's wish to invest £20 in pedlar's wares to hawk through the country.

"I only speak of this, Mr. Lacy, that as an experienced man of business, whose opinion must carry conviction with it, you may assure my eager boy here, that his scheme is altogether impracticable," she said, in a deprecating manner.

"But suppose I do not consider it impracticable, Mrs. Wynne," inquired Lacy, with a smile.

Amy looked up in surprise.

Owen's eyes danced.

"I tell you, Mrs. Wynne, that you must not judge Owen by any ordinary standard of boyhood. I have talked with him, or rather, he has talked with me, a great deal lately. And he has asked me more questions about wholesale, retail, and finance, and capital, credit, and business generally, in one day, than I could have answered in two years; more questions, in fact, than I ever thought of putting to myself, or to any one else."

"Yes, his thoughts run on those themes with a pertinacity that is perfectly amazing to me. I should have thought it would have been his ambition to follow his father's profession. I cannot imagine what could have put trade into his head."

"What, madam? Why, what puts it into the head of one boy of talent to read law, and nothing else, as if the world was filled with nobody but criminals and litigants? Or into the head of another to study medicine, as if the world were one great lazaret house? Or makes a third a theologian; a fourth an artist; and so forth, and so forth? Some special gift of Divine Providence, Mrs. Wynne, that fits the boy in question for the one career that he aspires to, and for no other—that would ensure him success in that career and in no other! Most of the failures in life are made by men who have been turned aside from the career for which nature had fitted them."

"But about Owen?"

"About Owen, dear Mrs. Wynne. Help him if you can; but do not hinder him, whatever you do. I was just going to give him the little start that he desires. Your son is no ordinary boy, Mrs. Wynne. He unites in himself three of the greatest elements of the highest success—wonderful acuteness of intellect, integrity of heart, and steadiness of aim. Trust in him; try him; give him the chance to show you what he can do," said Mr. Lacy, rising to leave.

"One moment, if you please, sir," said Amy, detaining him. "You perfectly understand the scheme in all its bearings?"

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Wynne."

"And approve it?"

"Heartily! I would myself advance the money for the boy."

"Thank you; there is no need of that. But," added Amy, smiling, "we must ask your help in another way."

"Certainly. Owen explained that. He wishes me to purchase some goods for him when I go to London to lay in my own stock. I need not say that I will do so with great pleasure."

"Thank you again. When do you go to London?"

"On Monday."

"Then, as we leave here to-morrow morning, we had better settle this business to-night," said Amy, taking out her purse and handing her note to Mr. Lacy. "I wish you to take half of that. I do not wish to risk more. I do not feel so sure of the success of this enterprise as you and Owen do," she added.

Mr. Lacy smiled. And as he happened to have taken the whole contents of his till and put them in his pocket to be carried home, he was able to give Amy her change. And then he arose and took leave.

"I hope you will succeed, Owen," said Amy, thoughtfully.

"I know I shall, mother, dear," answered the boy, confidently.

Amy was still very thoughtful. At length she said:

"It is our last night in our little home, Owen love—a home made doubly sacred by grief and joy; by death and by new life. Let us pray together, dear, that the Lord's blessing may rest upon the home that we leave as well as on the one where we go."

When these acts of devotion were over, Amy drew her little son to her bosom and tenderly embraced him, murmuring:

"Heaven bless you, my dear boy. Oh, Owen, how my heart swelled with joy to-night as Mr. Lacy spoke of you!"

"Mother, dear, mine didn't!" said Owen, solemnly.

"How, my child? What do you mean?"

"My heart didn't swell; it shrank!"

"Why, Owen? I don't understand you."

"Oh, mother, it was because I knew he thought I was a better boy than I was; and it made my heart shrink!"

"But, Owen, dear, you are a very good boy."

"Oh, no, mother. I can't help it! I must tell you the truth. You know we said we would tell each other all our secrets, didn't we?"

"Yes, darling," said Amy, speaking very gently, though her dark eyes dilated with a vague uneasiness.

What confession was her little son about to make?

"Mother dear, you don't know what a bad boy I sometimes feel myself."

"Feel yourself, Owen?" repeated Amy, with her eyes growing larger and larger with amazement.

"Yes, mother. I try to keep the badness down all I can."

"Tell me all about it, darling," said Amy, gazing at him with a queer blending of perplexity, amusement, and anxiety in the expression of her face.

"Well, then, mother, first—sometimes on Sunday I feel as if I would rather go sliding on the pond than go to church to hear Mr. Morley preach."

"That is bad, dear."

"But then I never do go sliding, but always go to church."

"What else, Owen dear?"

"Why, when the ladies you work for hurry you so much and pay you so little, I feel my angry passions rise, and I would like to—I don't know what I wouldn't like to say to them, and sometimes I can scarcely help saying it."

"Is that all, dear?"

"Oh, no, mother, not half. I covet my neighbour's goods whenever I go near the market and see the fine, fat poultry and the plump beef and mutton, and I grumble to myself to think that there should be so much there and none for you."

"Go on, dear."

"And now for the worst of all. Only to think of it, mother dear! It hardly seems to be my own self that was so near doing such a thing!"

"What—what, Owen?" asked Amy, in breathless anxiety.

"Robbing a poor, little bird's nest, mother. Oh! But I didn't do it! No, thanks be to goodness I didn't. I was just going to do it, to prove to the other boys that I could climb a tree and get a nest as well as any of them could. But I thought of the two poor little sisters in the cradle at home, and how I should feel, if I should come back and find somebody had been and stole them while I was gone! And so I let the poor little tiny birds alone."

"What else, Owen?"

"That is all, I believe, mother dear. You won't think me a good boy, now. And I am sorry for that; but still," said the child, smiling brightly,—"I feel better now I have told you all about it!"

Amy drew him to her bosom, and while she held him there she said:

"It seems that you have been tempted but you have

not sinned. To suffer temptation is not to fall into sin, my darling. But to resist temptation is the noblest effort of the soul. Always tell me your little inward trials and difficulties Owen."

"Indeed, I will, mother dear."

"Always, Owen," she said.

And she kissed him and sent him off to bed, and she thanked heaven, oh! how fervently, for her dear boy, of whose purity of heart and nobility of mind, every day gave a new revelation.

The next morning was a very busy one in Amy's little household.

As soon as breakfast was over, Nancy washed and packed up all the remaining pieces of crockery ware, cutlery, and so forth. And Amy dressed herself and the children for their ride.

At eight o'clock Mr. Miller's cart was at the door. And Mr. Miller himself walked into the shop.

"Mrs. Wynne," he said, "the cart will have to make two trips before it can take all your furniture, I am sure. And I think that you had better send your servant and your son on with the first load, to light fires and air the house and make it comfortable before you and the little ones go. You and they had better stay here until the cart comes back, and go with the second load."

"Thank you," said Amy, hesitatingly.

But Nancy spoke up.

"You do as the gentleman advises you. I dare say that the old barn is as cold and as damp as Siberian icebergs! which I make no doubt you might scrape the mould off the walls with a garden rake. You stay here till the afternoon, and let me and Owen go first and make the place comfortable for you."

"Do, mother, dear," said Owen, adding his voice to the urgings of the others.

And Amy took off her bonnet and sat down to wait.

The cart was soon loaded, and with Owen and Nancy perched high on the top of the furniture, it started gaily for Forest Lodge.

Amy mended her fire; sat the two children down in the cradle; and took a small roll of the everlasting needle-work from her pocket, and sat down to sew to pass away the time while waiting.

It was a desolate scene enough. More than half the furniture was gone; and the house looked very bare; there was nothing left in the room except the sewing chair and the cradle. And Amy quite dreaded the three or four hours that she would have to wait.

But she had sat there only about fifteen minutes when she was startled by the sound of a carriage driving up to the shop door.

When she hurried out to see who was there, she was surprised to behold Mrs. Potts, the landlady of the Elm Tree Inn, who had driven up in her gig.

"I can't leave the horse, my dear; but Mr. Miller has just told me that you are here all alone in this empty house waiting till the cart comes back for you. And so I have come to say that you must bring the babies, and get right in here, and go home long o' me to spend the morning and take dinner. And by that time the cart will come for you. Now bring the babies out and give me one of them to hold—I can hold a baby and drive a horse at the same time—and you can hold the other, and we shall get along quite comfortable. Harry now, my dear."

Amy thanked her kind neighbour, and hurried accordingly.

The doctor's man was in the shop, engaged in rearranging the shelves. And with him, Amy left word that as soon as the cart should return, she should be sent for from the Elm Tree Inn.

Amy spent a very pleasant morning in Mrs. Potts's cosy private parlour; and she had a comfortable dinner of roast chicken and rice pudding, with a good glass of wine.

And about four o'clock in the afternoon she was summoned by Owen—Owen looking so rosy, happy, and active.

"Come, mother dear," he said, "the rest of the things are all packed in the cart, and we are only waiting for you. It is such a jolly old house, mother! And your room is all ready for you. The carpet is down, and the curtains up, and the fire is made, and the kettle is on and the table is set. And oh! I think we shall be so happy there mother! so very happy." All this the eager boy poured forth breathlessly as he was ushered by the waiter into the little parlour where Amy and the children remained with their hostess.

"Don't you see Mrs. Potts, my dear?" said his mother, admonishingly.

Owen turned in a moment and he made his bow.

"And now, my little lad, have you had any dinner, out there?" asked Mrs. Potts.

"We didn't have time to think about it, ma'am," answered Owen.

"Ah! then I think the cart must wait a few minutes until you get some."

And Mrs. Potts spread a cloth, and brought in the remnant of the roast chicken and rice pudding, and

set them on the table, flanked by a loaf of bread and a pitcher of milk.

She then placed a chair for Owen, who, with another little bow of acknowledgment, seated himself at the table, where he did credit to his own appetite and the lady's hospitality.

While he was eating, Mrs. Potts was packing a hamper, in doing which she rolled about continually between the bar, the parlour and the dining-room.

And when Owen had finished his dinner, and Amy had put on the children's cloaks and her own bonnet and shawl, and they were all about to start, Mrs. Potts called her waiter and bade him put that hamper into Mrs. Wynne's cart.

And then turning to Amy she said:

"I know, dear, when people are moving, it is inconvenient to have cooking done. And so I have taken the liberty to put a thing or two into that hamper, already cooked. Well, good-bye, dear! And God bless you," she said, stopping with a kiss the outpouring of the widow's thanks.

The cart, with the remnant of the furniture, had been drawn up before the inn, and Amy and the children were lifted into it and comfortably seated in a nest made of the pillows that had been left for that purpose.

Owen took his seat beside the driver, and the cart started, followed by the cheers and good wishes of all the people of the inn.

In passing their own old home, Amy looked fondly upon it, and prayed that a blessing might rest with it.

On the opposite side of the way, Mr. Lacy stood in his door, waving adieu.

Amy nodded and smiled. Owen took off his hat; and even lively Lily Gay clapped her hands and crowded.

When the cart got opposite the parsonage, Amy looked up; but there was no one at the window to see her pass; so kissing her hand in adieu to the invisible friends within, she went on; and some time before they reached Mr. Spicer's shop at the end of the village, they saw the big grocer standing in his door with his head turned up the street, watching for them.

As the cart was passing, Mr. Spicer hailed it and ran out to stop it.

All a-glow with his haste, he shook hands with Amy, who, in her innocent gratitude, retained the big hand in both her own for a while before she let it go.

He shook hands with Owen, and patted Lily Gay upon the head—Lily Gay, who made friends with him immediately, and insisted on climbing out of her nest and going over to him then and there.

And all this time "Good afternoon" had been the only words that passed between them all.

The grocer turned and beckoned to his young man, who now came from the shop lugging a huge box, which, with the aid of the driver, he lifted upon the cart.

Amy looked from one to the other, as if silently asking what this could mean.

"A parting gift Mrs. Wynne. You cannot refuse it, my dear lady. It is—it is for the children."

"Oo—oo! um! aa!" cried Little Gay, in inarticulate baby-talk, as she fought and struggled to get out of her nest and climb up to the bosom of the big grocer, with whose kind face she had fallen in love. Lily May gazed on in utter amazement. And Owen laughed. And Amy smiled.

Mr. Spicer patted the child gently on the head, shook hands all round, prayed God bless them, and went back to his shop.

And the cart started and soon left the village behind, and was jolting along the rough country road that led through the forest.

Amy was very thoughtful. Lily Gay was sulky, and wouldn't be entranced, because they had not let her go over to that kind face that had smiled on her like sunshine.

All the rest of the little party were happy enough.

"Mother, there are no springs to this cart. Does its motion hurt you?" inquired her little son.

"Oh, no, dear! I like to be jolted; it seems to do me good."

"What is the matter, then?"

"People are so good to me, Owen dear! It makes me feel grave to think of it. Not unhappy, mind you; for it couldn't make me unhappy—but grave; for I ask myself, how should it be?"

"Oh, mother dear, how can people help being good to you—darling mother, when you are so good yourself?"

"Hush, my dear! It may be because I have had such an awful sorrow."

And Amy's face suddenly became so serious that Lily Gay, who evidently thought that her pouts were the cause of all, suddenly relented, and fell to crowing, and laughing, and caressing her mother with all her heart.

And the cart went on through the forest that bright

February afternoon, and in due time came out upon the open space, in the midst of which, embosomed in shrubbery, stood the old hall.

(To be continued.)

HOW TO AVOID COLDS.

PHYSIOLOGISTS have said that if a few drops of the blandest fluid in nature are injected into a blood-vessel against the current, death is an instantaneous result.

Millions of canals or tubes from the inner portions of the body, open their little mouths at the surface, and through these channels, as ceaseless as the flow of time, a fluid containing the wastes and impurities of the system is passing outwards, and is emptied out on the skin; ordinarily, it is so attenuated, so near like the air, that it cannot be seen with the naked eye, but extraordinarily, under the influence of increased natural or artificial heat, as from exercise or fire, this fluid is more profuse, and is seen and known as "the sweat of the brow"—perspiration.

This fluid must have exit, or we die in a few hours. If it does not have vent at the surface of the body, it must have some internal outlet. Nature abhors shocks as she does a vacuum. Heat distends the mouths of these ducts, and promotes a larger and more rapid flow of the contained fluid. On the other hand, cold contracts them, and the fluid is at first arrested, dams up and re-bounds.

If the purest warm milk, injected against the current of the blood, kills in a moment, not from any chemical quality, but from the force against the natural current, there need be no surprise at the ill-effects of suddenly closing the mouths of millions of tubes at the same instant, causing a violence at every pin-head surface of the body.

If these mouths are gradually closed, nature has time to adapt herself to the circumstances by opening her channels into the great internal "water-ways" of the body, and no harm follows. Hence the safety of cooling off slowly after exercise or being in a heated apartment, and the danger of cooling off rapidly, under the same circumstances, familiarly known by the expression "checking the perspiration."

The result of closing the pores of the skin is various, according to the direction the shock takes, and this is always to the weakest part. In the little child it is to the throat, and there is croup or diphtheria. To the adult it is to the head, giving catarrh in the head or running of the nose; to the lungs, giving a bad cold, or, if very violent, causing pneumonia, or inflammation of the lungs themselves; or pleurisy, inflammation of the covering of the lungs, causing profuse or sudden diarrhoea. If the current is determined to the liver, there is obstinate constipation, or bilious fever, or sick headache. Hence a "cold" is known by a cough, when perspiration is driven inward, and is directed to the lungs; by pleurisy, when to the lining of the lungs; by a sick headache or bilious fever, when to the liver, &c.

To avoid bad colds, then, it is only necessary to avoid closing the pores of the skin, either rapidly, by checking perspiration, or slowly, by remaining until the body is thoroughly chilled, that is, until the pores are nearly or entirely closed by inaction in a cold atmosphere or room. In the matter of health, these suggestions are of incalculable importance.

THE extraordinary disclosures that have been lately made public connected with the City and Strand robberies, wonderful as they are, are not without precedent, as may be gleaned, from the following narrative, founded on fact. Some few years ago the directors of the Bank of England received a written communication saying that the writer, who did not give his name, would meet them any evening, and at any hour they named, in the bullion room of the bank, and which was considered as impregnable as the Rock of Gibraltar, or the Citadel of Quebec. No notice was at first paid to the anonymous scribe, but as the letters were continued a few of the directors agreed to answer and accept the invitation to meet the mysterious writer in the stronghold of the bank. At the hour and night appointed they entered this auriferous sanctum, and to their great surprise and consternation, found they were not alone, as a man in the garb of a labourer, with lantern in hand, stood before them. The enigma was soon solved by the stranger pointing to the floor, in which was an aperture large enough to admit of any man ascending. "This, gentlemen," said he "communicates with a drain, and having once been called upon to repair it, I discovered how easy it would be to make an entrance into this otherwise strongly-protected room." The directors congratulated themselves on the discovery, took every precaution against a recurrence of the circumstance, and rewarded the man who had given the information with £500. Fortunately the man was honest; had he been otherwise, he might have obtained thousands by communicating the secret to those who live by plunder.



[THE PIRATE'S PROPOSAL TO JUAN.]

THE SWORD MAKER OF TOLEDO

CHAPTER XX.

A friend? I give you here my hand! I'm your's
With all I have. Not men, but money
Will the count want.

The Piccolomini.

When Count Garcia, otherwise Captain Monaldo, heard the retreat of his late captives with Juan Montes, he fairly writhed in his bonds, turning over and over upon the green sward, working his mouth to rid himself of the gag, and finally ceasing his exertions and becoming livid and ghastly.

"I swear a fearful revenge!" he exclaimed, furiously. "Robbed of Syria, cheated of her father's wealth, overcome by him! Oh! he shall suffer!"

But as the night waned, and the morning breeze, full of freshness, came to herald the dawn, his thoughts changed, and a new fear came upon him.

If he should be rescued by one of his men, as was likely, the false hair beside him and the gay clothes he wore would reveal his late disguise, and his secret would be known to them.

"I shall then be in their power," he thought. "They will know me as the king's chamberlain! I am ruined—ruined!"

Again he struggled frantically with his bonds, but they did not yield or break, and he finally lapsed into slumber, watching the morning beams as they broke over the scene, hearing the morning songs of the birds around him, and watching, with unblinking eyes the sun as he appeared and began to climb the heavens.

But what abysses were in Garcia's soul as he lay there so weak and exhausted!

What fearful hate arose within him against Juan Montes!

It was still early morning when he heard footsteps, and a coarse voice singing a bandit's song, near him; and then these words came to his ears:

"A horse hitched to a tree. This is odd. The rider must be somewhere near. The horse is good, and perhaps I may pick up a little something for myself. I'll look for the owner!"

Garcia recognized the voice of Bartolomo, his second in command.

A quick glow of hope came to his face, but the next moment he tried to move himself away into the bushes.

The rustling he made in the leaves reached the hearing of Bartolomo, and he soon discovered him, and came to his side.

"Here's a mystery!" exclaimed the lieutenant, kneeling beside his captain. "A man with the complexion and eyes of Monaldo, but beardless and bound. Ah! It is Count Garcia, the king's chamberlain, as I live! And here is the captain's beard. What on earth, your Excellency, does this mean?"

He puzzled look recalled the count to himself. He mumbled feebly, and Bartolomo, discovering the gag, speedily removed it, and then Garcia said:

"Unbind me quickly, Bartolomo, and name your reward! Hasten!"

"He knows me!" exclaimed the lieutenant, his puzzled look deepening. "That is the captain's voice too. How singular! There he was in the cave all night, or most of it, and this morning, the guard says, he went out in the night by the water-outlet, and I come out to look around, and find his counterpart, with a false beard and hair, lying on the ground, gagged and bound, who turns out to be the king's chamberlain!"

"I am your captain!" declared the count, his anger rising. "Release me—"

There was no mistaking the gleaming eyes now glaring upon him, and Bartolomo hastened to undo his leader's bonds, and assist him to his feet.

"So, Count Garcia and Captain Monaldo are one!" exclaimed the lieutenant, as his superior proceeded to shake out his damp garments and fasten on his wig and beard. "The king's chamberlain and the proscribed outlaw are the same person! What a little romance! How the men will stare when I tell them! What would not the government give for the information!" and a scheming look came into his eyes.

Count Garcia turned fiercely upon him.

"This little affair is to be kept secret," he said.

"Remember!"

"My memory sometimes needs assistance," retorted the lieutenant. "The glitter of gold is sure to help it."

"I will pay you, then," said the count, in a voice that trembled with anger at his companion's insubordinate manner and tone. "And now let us go to the cave. My clothing is damp, and I am hungry."

"Hungry? After that huge tray full of food you ordered into Ben Israel's cell last evening?"

Almost choking with his rage, Count Garcia briefly related the trick that had been played upon his followers by Juan Montes.

"Smart fellow, that sword-maker," commented, Bartolomo, fixing a furtive gaze upon his companion's face. "He came out a little ahead of you, your excellency—or captain, I suppose I should say."

Garcia gave a wrathful look at his companion, and muttered, inaudibly:

"And I am in the power of this wretch? He can even have me executed if he chooses to turn evidence against me! He has long been jealous of my power over the men. I am unsafe—unsafe!"

With the latter thought came a sudden wish that Bartolomo was dead—his voice hushed for ever.

The wish was father to a resolve that he should not return to the cave alive.

When they were in the wildest part of the gorge, Garcia suddenly turned upon his lieutenant, with the spirit of murder flaming in his eyes, and said:

"You mean to betray me, Bartolomo—you know you do! You are mistaken in me, that's all! Ha! Ha!"

With that hoarse laugh bubbling through his lips, Garcia drew his sword and rushed upon his lieutenant. The latter was wholly unprepared for the assault, but made a blind resistance, and begged for mercy.

"Mercy!" cried Garcia. "Never!"

As he spoke he plunged his sword into the breast of Bartolomo, and the next moment the eyes of the lieutenant were glazed by death, and staring at him with a horrified look.

"Dead!" ejaculated the count, wiping his brows.

"And now my secret is safe from my band. To save it from the knowledge of the world, I must also kill that Juan Montes. If Jewish friends of his are still in the country I shall have to deal with them too. They have taken our swiftest horses and gone to Valencia. I must follow them immediately. They have a good start, and I cannot overtake them, but I doubt their having left the country."

He drew the body of his late lieutenant aside into the bushes, covered it carefully with leaves, and sticks, and stones, and then arranged his disordered dress and hastened to the cave.

He found the men engaged in discussing his mysterious supposed departure with his prisoners, and he said:

"It does look strange, boys; but I came to the conclusion that they had no money, and so took them away and sent them on the road to Valencia. I did not wish to disturb you about it; but now I wish I had. The old Jew must have money. Let us start in pursuit!"

"But they will reach Valencia first," objected some of the men.

"We can arrange all that without imperilling ourselves," responded Monaldo. "I have heard that the king's chamberlain, Count Garcia, is now stopping at the little house in the woods, five miles this side of the city, and half-a-dozen of you can go there to see him,

and he will conduct you in perfect safety through Valencia. He will help you find these Jews, and you will help him find a certain Juan Montes, sword-maker, whom he is sent by the king to arrest."

"And you want us to put our heads into the lion's mouth?" demanded one of the men. "The king's chamberlain will have us arrested!"

"Not so. I did him a favour once, for which he will befriend you. Go! I will be responsible for your safety while with him. I shall go part of the way with you, but I am well known, and do not wish to venture too far."

The men had faith in Monaldo, he having already enriched them by his skilful leadership, and half-a-dozen reckless fellows soon offered to set out in search of Ben Israel, provided half of the wealth they might gain should be equally divided among them.

This was agreed to by Monaldo.

"This is a queer freak of the captain's," commented a grey-haired brigand. "How curious to take prisoners away in the night, sily by the water-outlet, and send them off, and then change his mind about it, and send after them. But it is not my business to say anything—of course not!"

The words of the man making some impression upon the others, Monaldo hastened to say:

"See here, Pepe, I met Bartolomeo on my return a little while ago, and dispatched him to Toledo, on my horse, which is the swiftest, you know, to learn what trains are leaving by other roads, and what hope of plunder there is. These government officials are getting so particular now that the Jews are beginning to have hard work to bring away their valuables with them; but we can't fail to make something out of them; and, if there are any larger or richer companies going by other routes, we want to know the fact. What I have to say to you is this: You are a brave man and well liked by your comrades. If agreeable to all of them, I will constitute you my lieutenant while Bartolomeo is gone. What do you say, boys?"

The proposition was greeted with applause.

"Oh, thank you captain!" cried Pepe, in delight, his suspicions all thrown to the wind.

"I am proud to serve you!"

"You will remain here, lieutenant," said Monaldo, giving Pepe his new title, "while the six men are gone to Valencia. The road will be thronged to-day, and you will have a fine chance to plunder. Jews on foot, on mules, and on horses, will fill up the roads, for they have come to a hard pass now. Not a Spaniard will give them food or shelter. They are leaving Spain by every avenue. Thousands have fled and are fleeing to Portugal. The stirring times have come. There's no knowing but you may be permanent lieutenant, Pepe. If you are faithful to me, you shall be."

Pepe assured his captain that he would be faithful; and, highly gratified by his manner, Count Garcia partook of a hot breakfast, changed his garments, and, taking a little bundle of clothes in his hands, went away with his six followers, first mentioning to Pepe, that he had seen a horse in the road below the gorge, and it had better be put with the rest.

Monaldo and his six men clattered all day along the road toward Valencia, but at nightfall they stopped at a lonely wayside inn to rest. And there the captain renewed their directions, and then left them on pretended business to the northward.

But instead of proceeding to the northward, he kept on toward Valencia, riding all night, and arriving the next day, resting the following night, and arriving at the house in the woods where he had appointed to meet his men, on the morning of the third day.

This dwelling was small and deserted. It had been used several times as a rendezvous by the brigands, and was surrounded by trees that made a dense shade.

Here Garcia dismounted, placed his horse under an adjoining shed, and then entered the house. His first movement was to remove his false hair and wash his face of the powder upon it. He then changed his garments for those he had brought in the bundle, and was soon himself—the wily chamberlain of the king.

He then concealed the articles he had removed in a little closet, opening into the wall, and proceeded to take care of his horse.

"The boys must not recognize the animal," he muttered, "although they would never suspect me if they should know him!"

He brought out a couple of bottles from the same closet, in which he had deposited his clothes, and began to dye his horse's hair in spots, and he next placed an entirely different saddle and equipments upon him.

"That will do!" he muttered, with satisfaction, concealing the bottles and the accoutrements his horse had brought. "That dye will wash off with water, and no one would know the animal. And now I can take a little sleep, I suppose. The boys won't be here for some time yet!"

He drew out a bear-skin from a corner, and having fastened the door, threw himself upon it, and was soon asleep.

He slept for several hours, but was awakened at last by a thundering knock upon the door. He arose and opened it, finding himself face to face with his six followers.

"Are you Count Garcia, the king's chamberlain?" inquired Otoro, the leader of the gang.

"I am!" he responded. "And you come from Captain Monaldo, I suppose?"

"We do," said Otoro, with a breath of relief. "He sent us here, saying we were to help you find a young sword-maker, and you would assist us to detain certain Jews—"

"Very well. I'll be ready in a few moments. Rest yourselves, sanores!"

Garcia donned his cloak and hat, and, with a satisfied smile, brought out his horse, and declared his readiness to depart.

They were soon on the road together, hastening to Valencia.

It was quite late in the day when they arrived, and the streets were crowded with Jews and Spaniards, the former of whom were continually crowding in from all parts of the adjacent country.

They were noble-looking men and women, with beauty and stateliness, but with sad faces and weary movements.

Count Garcia immediately began an examination of the various inns, to discover the stopping-place of the fugitives; but evening had closed in and his temper was exhausted, when he reached the right place.

"Have a couple of Jews, one elderly, the other young, accompanied by a maiden and a Spanish youth, been here to-day?" he demanded.

"A good many Jews have been here," replied the man—"more than we've had room for. Let me see. Accompanied by a maiden and a Spanish youth? Did this youth look like a prince in disguise, with a gentle, yet haughty, manner?"

"Yes, yes!" responded Garcia, impatiently.

"Well, they've been here. The maiden, I took it, was the girl he loved. But they have gone!"

"Where?" demanded the count.

"That I can't tell you. Whether they went off in a vessel, or are wandering about the street, I do not know. They set off in search of a vessel. The young Spaniard came back alone and sold me three of the horses, and I paid him in good gold too—if I did get them cheap!"

The money received for these horses was that applied by Juan for the purchase of provisions for the voyage of the fugitives.

Having a slight trace of those he sought, Count Garcia took his men and proceeded on foot down to the wharves, where he made inquiries and discovered that a ship had sailed a few hours before, having on board hundreds of Jews.

"They're in her, I don't doubt!" he muttered, furiously. "Montes probably remained behind, as the landlord spoke of having bought only three of the horses. I must look for him."

It was a glorious night—brilliant with moonlight and starlight.

The narrow streets, shaded by their gloomy moorish buildings; the wharves and the spectral-looking shipping, all were flooded in the soft moonlight, that seemed almost as bright as day.

The river stretched away towards the sea like a mirror, save that tiny ripples kissed the shore, and the evening breeze played upon its surface.

There were people on the wharves, many of whom had no other lodging-place for the night, preferring to save their scanty funds to pay some ship captain to carry them away; but Count Garcia did not discover Juan among them.

"We must scour the city, boys," he said; "but first I mean to try to follow the vessel those Jews left in. It is possible that we can overtake her. In that case we can seize young Montes at any time."

He looked about, and soon succeeded in hiring a small fishing-boat, which its owner was tying up for the night; and in this the seven took their seats, and the owner seized the oars.

"Which vessel does your excellency wish to visit?" asked the boatman.

"I want to overtake the Santa Maria that left to-day. Can you not recommend a vessel?"

"They are all loaded down," returned the man, dubiously. "There's only one lying here that is at all swift, and she's a suspicious character. She came in here yesterday, and fitted up to-day; so I suppose she is ready for an instant departure. That is she, lying yonder."

He pointed to a long, dark vessel near them.

"Row us alongside of her," commanded Garcia.

It was done.

Before they could mount her side, a dark-visaged man looked over, and demanded their business.

"That I will communicate to the captain," responded the count. "I wish to see him."

The captain, a sinister-looking man, was called, and came to the side, looking upon them.

"I wish to see you on private business," said the count, addressing him, "in your cabin."

"Come aboard then," was the reply. "Your men can stay where they are."

Count Garcia climbed up, and was conducted by the captain to the lighted cabin.

"The Santa Maria left here to-day," he said, the villain, plunging directly into his business, "and I wish to pursue her. I have authority to detain some Jews who are on-board of her. I will pay you liberally if you will run her down."

The captain shook his head.

"The Santa Maria has hours the start, and a good breeze to carry her along," he said. "We couldn't catch up with her. The Jews you speak of are beyond your reach."

"I would pay any amount—"

"No use, senor. I can't do it. I would try it if there was any hope."

Count Garcia bowed, and was about to take his departure, when his foggy brain originated another villainous plan, and he said:

"I hear, captain, that your vessel is a suspicious character. By that, I suppose, is meant that you are one of the pirates who have taken to the seas to plunder the fugitive Jews of what they have left?"

He had taken a keen glance around the cabin, and noticed that it was half-filled with weapons, and had made a sudden guess at the character of the vessel from those indications.

The captain's face flushed and paled.

"Pirate!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, pirate. Your manner confirms my suspicions. But you need have no fears from my discovery. I won't betray you. In fact, I'm one of your sort of men."

The captain brightened, but regarded his visitor suspiciously.

"I suppose you'll be leaving port soon?" went on Count Garcia.

"This very night."

"Good!" exclaimed Garcia, in a tone of satisfaction. "I have an enemy on shore—a low-born fellow—whom I am anxious to rid myself of. If I will bring him aboard to-night, will you take him with you?"

"What would you want done with him?" asked the captain.

"Oh, anything," laughed the chamberlain. "Anything but letting him come ashore. Saw him up in a blanket, and drop him into the sea. Sell him to the Algerines, or put him to work."

"I am a little short of men," mused the captain; "and one reason I ran in here was to get more. Yes, I'll take him, and be glad too, if he is young and active. I'd like twenty more just like him."

Garcia smiled, and took pains to express some of his private sentiments upon pirates, and their trade, in such a manner as to convince the captain he had nothing to fear from him, and he then admitted that he belonged to that fraternity.

"I knew it," returned the count, quietly. "People don't carry cannon and so many weapons for nothing. I'll bring the fellow aboard some time in the night. He's somewhere in the city."

This being agreed to, they separated, Garcia re-entering his boat, and going ashore with his men. He paid the boatman liberally, and engaged him to remain at the same spot until his return—even if it were not until morning—and then he said:

"Boys, I believe the fellow has gone back to his inn. It's almost bed-time, and he won't be likely to be out late. We'll go there. Otoro, have your rope ready to bind him."

They hastened to the inn, and just as they entered the door, Count Garcia brushed against Juan.

Our hero had remained about the wharves, or walking about the city, ever since Syria's departure, and now, exhausted by his griefs, he had returned to the inn with the hope of seeking forgetfulness in sleep.

"Ah, here you are," said the count, softly, while a hideous, malignant smile curved his lips. "I am glad to see you, Don Juan."

Juan regarded him as though he had been a viper.

The count paled with rage, and making a sign to Otoro, which the latter understood, Juan was instantly seized and pinioned before he had perceived Garcia's companions, a scurf was stuffed in his mouth, to prevent his calling for help, and the successful villain then looked about him to see if his operation had attracted attention—but it had not!

"We'll take him to the vessel," he said, in a tone of exultation.

Two of the men supported Juan, and the remainder of the party closed in around them, and in this manner they gained the boat.

They were quickly rowed to the pirate ship, and Juan was carried into the cabin, and then gagged.

"Here he is, captain," said Count Garcia, pointing to the young sword-maker. "Make a sailor of him, or convert him into food for fishes, just as you like."

never let him step upon the soil of Spain again."

The captain assented, with ill concealed satisfaction, as his dull eyes marked the noble form, the alert, slight figure and keen eyes of Juan, and it was easy to see that he was delighted with his acquisition to his crew.

"And now, young man," said the chamberlain, in a tone that was inaudible to the captain but distinct to the hearing of Juan, "let me tell you that I have begun my revenge upon you for your late trick. From this moment you are an outlaw, and, if caught by any one, are liable to be executed. In fact, you are on board of a pirate."

Juan involuntarily shuddered, but his proud, calm face did not blanch before his adversary's keen gaze and triumphant smile.

"Well, captain," said Garcia, in a raised tone of voice, as he turned to that officer, "I suppose you will be off soon?"

"Immediately—the moment you have gone ashore."

"I would add one word to what I have said to you," remarked the count. "This fellow is high-spirited, though low-born, and you will have to break him down. Be harsh with him. Don't stand any min from him."

"Never fear that," said the captain, dardly. "I know how to manage refractory seamen. He'll soon be one of us, or be under the sea. I'll venture that I'll break his spirit."

"And here is a parting gift from me," observed Garcia, drawing out a full purse. "It is to recompense you for any violence you may do your own spirit in breaking his."

The captain leered, and took it.

Count Garcia bade a mocking adieu to Juan, but he seemed qualified before the stern look he encountered, and with a constrained laugh he left the cabin and returned to his men, and they all went ashore.

Remaining the boatman, they stood upon the wharf, and the chamberlain watched with gleaming eyes the sudden activity that reigned aboard the vessel. The anchor was lifted, the sails set, and the ship sailed down the river on her way to the sea.

"He is gone!" said Garcia, in a tone of gratified revenge. "Gone for ever! And now, boys, we will leave the city. My revenge on him is begun. He has a long death before him!"

CHAPTER XXI

Fate hath no voice but the heart's impulse.
I am all his! His present—his abode!
In this new life which lives in me? He hath
A right to his own creature. What was I
But his fair love infused a soul into me?

Schiller.

For a long time Juan remained alone in the cabin, friend and helpless. He did not grieve or mourn over his fate, his thoughts of Syria and his foster-father occupying his whole mind. He wondered what Senor Montes would think of his non-return, and how he would get along in his business without his assistance. He pictured Syria as lying upon the deck of the vessel, all her troubles forgotten in sleep, and perhaps dreaming of him. And then he thought of Rafael Ezra, to whom her loving thoughts were now due, and his heart sank despairingly within him.

But when the captain returned to the cabin, his face was as calm and quiet as though no torturing fears were eating at his heart.

"Bully, eh?" was the officer's greeting. "We've left the river far behind us, and we are now out upon the open sea, so you may as well make the best of your situation. I need hands here, and if you're of a mind to obey orders and do your duty, why you may have your liberty. What do you say?"

The temptation was strong within Juan's soul to strictly refuse doing anything about the vessel, but he reflected that he might be kept confined, or killed, if he refused, while on the other hand, he might have some chance to escape.

"You may unbind me," he said, briefly.

"You are sensible," responded the captain, "taking a hint from the wall, and cutting Juan's bonds."

"What is your name?"

"Juan Montes."

"And I am Captain Belte, and your master!" said the officer. "You will find me a hard one if you are not particularly careful."

Juan's eyes flashed, but he controlled his spirit, and said nothing.

"And now sit down," said Captain Belte. "This has been rather a singular occurrence this evening—your arrival here. It seems strange that a gentleman like the one who brought you here should be so interested in a low-born fellow, as he says you are. Not that I believe that, though," he added, speaking more to himself. "I'd like to hear your story."

Juan saw that the man was actuated only by curiosity, and that nothing would tempt him to restore to him his liberty, so he replied, coldly:

"I have no story, Captain Belte, to relate."

"No story, and brought aboard bound. I understand you. You do not wish to tell me. Do as you choose; but remember that your refusal will only make your own case harder."

Juan took refuge in silence.

"Since you are so gruff," continued Captain Belte, "you may as well go on deck and see about going to work. Report yourself to my lieutenant."

Juan bowed coldly and left the cabin, going on deck. There were plenty of seamen attending to their duties, and the lieutenant stood gazing over the sides of the vessel into the water.

Juan felt a choking sensation in his throat. As he glanced upward at the glorious sky and downward at the shining water, which seemed another sky with the reflections of the stars upon its surface.

He inquired of one of the seamen, and discovered the whereabouts and identity of the lieutenant in question, and then advanced to his side saying: "Captain Belte wished me to report to you—"

"Oh! you're the new sailor," exclaimed the lieutenant, curiously. "We've heard of your advent on board. You want work? I'll give you work, and plenty of it, but not to-night. You can keep your eyes about you till it's time to turn in, and whatever you learn to-night may save you trouble to-morrow."

Thus warned, Juan applied himself to the study of seamanship, keeping a keen eye upon every movement of the sailors, giving heed to every order and its execution until he was ordered to turn in, and then one of the seamen showed him to his berth.

The next day brought with it work; but Juan's quickness and activity disarmed the lieutenant of all impatience, and he declared to the captain that never such a ready hand had been seen on the Tiburon (sea-shark).

On the fourth day out, when Juan had begun to win more consideration from the officers on account of his quickness and reticence, they came in sight of a ship that lay at anchor, and headed directly for it, sure that they had found prey.

This ship Juan recognized with horror as the Santa Maria.

She was strangely silent, not a form moving on her decks, her sails furled, and she looked lifeless and deserted.

Captain Belte and his officers gathered on deck to look at her, and the former asked:

"Can this be a trap for us?"

"I think not," replied his lieutenant.

"Don't you remember seeing her in port and remarking upon her great load of passengers? This is the same vessel."

"I remember," said the captain, with more animation. "It's the same ship that mysterious gentleman wanted us to chase. We shall have a chance now to get hold of his Jews. I wish I'd asked their names. I wonder," he added, "why she lies so still and deserted? We will see."

They came nearer and nearer to the anchored vessel, until they lay alongside, the grappling irons were thrown, and Captain Belte, his lieutenant, half-a-dozen men, and Juan went on board.

What a sight met their gaze!

The dead and dying lay about the decks, some just heaving their last sigh, others helplessly prostrate in the sunlight and heat.

There were young and old lying there, the beautiful, innocent, and noble, all alike stricken and dying.

The intruders paused in amazement.

"What is the matter?" asked Captain Belte of a dying man, whom Juan recognized as Rabbi Benjamin.

"The plague—the plague!" he gasped. "We were stricken on the very first day out. The ship had been visited by the plague on her way to Valencia, and the infection lingered. Help—help!"

Juan looked wildly around the deck, but he saw nothing of Syria, nor her father, nor Rafael Ezra.

What if they were already dead!

He reeled with the thought.

Some of the pirate crew began to demand their departure, fearing infection; but the glitter of a necklace upon the throat of a dead maiden tempted the captain to remain, and Juan seized the opportunity of crossing the deck and descending to the cabin.

Although the small windows were open, the air was laden with a foul odour that almost stifled him, and he feared to enter lest he should find none but the dead within.

On entering, he saw that the floor was covered with blankets, on which the sick reposed, and that the hue of death was on nearly every face he beheld.

"Syria!" he cried, with irrepressible anguish. "Syria! are you here?"

As his voice rang sharply through the cabin, a state-room door opened, and Syria, pale and wan appeared.

He sprang forward, and she fell fainting in his arms.

"Thank God!" he articulated. I feared—ah! I feared—"

Without completing the sentence, he carried her into the state-room where Ben Israel was seated by the bed-side of Rafael Ezra, whose ghastly face attested that he too was stricken with the plague.

"Juan Montes!" ejaculated Ben Israel. "Again in our need you have come to us! Heaven is merciful!"

"Hush!" whispered Juan, hearing the sound of voices in the cabin, and realizing that his enemies were probably looking for him. "Say nothing. They are searching for me."

He laid the insensible form of Syria beside Rafael, and crept into an upper berth, pulling the sheet over his face, and waited.

(To be continued.)

VALUE OF LIVINGS.

A RETURN has just been laid before Parliament of the sales effected under the Lord Chancellor's Act for the Augmentation of Benefices. It appears from this return that the satisfactory progress which was commenced in the first year of the operation of this act has been completely maintained in the twelvemonth just concluded. The total number of livings of which the advowsons have been sold is 63, and the total amount of purchase money is £113,129.

In introducing the return to the House of Lords the other day, the Lord Chancellor explained that the amount of money received in the course of the year was £57,829. The sum received in the last twelve months, therefore, was larger by about £2,500 than the amount which had been realized during the fifteen months which immediately followed upon the act coming into operation. A considerable portion of this sum, however, is in fulfilment of contracts previously agreed upon. The amount would, no doubt, have been larger but for the unfavourable condition of the money market during the past year. This cause has somewhat checked the sale of livings for a time, but the Lord Chancellor stated that there was constant inquiry for them, and he thought there was every appearance that the act would continue to work satisfactorily. An examination of the details of the return amply bears out this impression.

The amounts realized have greatly exceeded Lord Westbury's anticipations, and they are certainly very satisfactory. The average number of years' purchase for which the livings have been sold appears to have been about ten. It has varied, of course, according to the age of the incumbent. Where this has been great, the advowsons have often sold at a very much higher rate than ten years' purchase; where it has been low, the price has been naturally fallen considerably below it. For instance, a living in the diocese of Norwich, of which the net annual value is about £261 has sold for no less than £5,000; but the age of the incumbent is 91 years. A living in Wiltshire, of which the net income is about £400, has been sold for £6,000, the incumbent being 71 years of age; and another in Leicestershire, of which the income is £176 and the incumbent 67 years old, has been sold for £2,900. Even a little living in Sussex, of which the net value is less than £17 a-year, has realized as much as £550, the incumbent's age being 72.

On the other hand, a living of rather more than £200 a-year in Suffolk, the incumbent of which is only 32, has been bought for as little as £850. This, however, is an exceptionally low price even in the case of this class of incumbencies. One living, for example, in Pembrokehire, of the net annual value of less than £150, and the incumbent of which is only 30, has been sold for as much as £1,100, or at more than seven years' purchase. There can be no doubt, after such instances, that these advowsons fetch their full value. The whole of the money thus received is applied, in one way or other, to the augmentation of benefices, and the income of the Church has, therefore, been already increased by the operation of this act to the amount of little less than £4,000 a-year.

WEARING FLANNEL.—In our climate, fickle in its gleams of sunshine and its balmy airs as a coquette with her smiles and favours, consumption bears away every year the ornaments of many social circles. The fairest and loveliest are its favourites. An ounce of prevention in this fatal disease is worth many pounds of cure, for when once well seated, it mocks alike medical skill and careful nursing. If the fair sex could be induced to regard the laws of health, many precious lives might be saved; but pasteboard soles, the low-neck dresses, and Lilliputian hats, now annually, the seeds of a fatal harvest—"Put it on at once; winter and summer nothing better can be worn next to the skin than a loose red woollen shirt; 'loose,' for

it has room to move on the skin, thus causing a titillation which draws the blood to the surface, and keeps it there, and when that is the case, no one can take cold; 'red,' for white flannel fills up, mats together, and becomes tight, stiff, heavy, and impervious. Cotton-wool merely absorbs the moisture from the surface, while woollen flannel conveys it from the skin and deposits it in drops on the outside of the shirt, from which the ordinary cotton shirt absorbs it, and by its nearer exposure to the air it is soon dried without injury to the body. Having these properties, red wool flannel is worn by sailors even in the midsummer of the warmest countries. Wear a thinner material in summer.

A BATTLE WITH A BEAR.

ONE pleasant day, in the autumn of 1833 (said an old hunter, who kindly related his story for our amusement and edification), I was out looking for game, and becoming tired with my long ramble, I sat down on a rock to rest myself.

It was a beautiful and romantic spot, in a deep, secluded valley, with a pretty little stream tumbling over a rough bed, and forming a delightful cascade within a few feet of me; and giving myself up to the enjoyment of the scene, I soon became absorbed and lost in a very pleasing reverie—the steady flash and musical roar of the waters acting upon my mind like a charm.

The waterfall might have been thirty feet in height, and I was sitting on the projecting point of the ledge, some ten feet lower down, and directly over the bed of the stream, with the hill rising steep behind me for a hundred feet to a plateau of several acres, which was covered by an open wood, and was clear of underbrush.

Between me and this plateau were a few rocks and bushes, and here and there a shrub, but no regular trees; and below me the descent was perpendicular for at least twenty feet. In fact, I could not descend without leaping or falling, for the upper portion of the ledge I was on completely overhung the lower, and all around the base were sharp, angular rocks, that would have broken every bone in my body.

This was my position, sitting on the edge of the ledge, my feet hanging over it, my right arm thrown around a shrub, my left grasping my rifle, which lay across my lap, my eyes resting upon the waterfall, and my thoughts wandering off to I do not remember where, when I was suddenly recalled to myself and startled by a low, savage growl. I turned my head, glanced up the hill, and saw a large bear, sitting on his haunches, looking sharply down at me, swaying to and fro, and evidently debating with himself whether to venture down and attack me or not.

In almost any other situation in the world I think I should have felt some degree of pleasure in seeing Mr. Bruin within such an easy, certain range; but, under the circumstances, I confess I did not.

The fact is, I was in something like a trap. I could not descend directly without dashing out my brains; I could not keep along the hill half-a-dozen rods either way, without first going up very near the top, where the bear was—which I did not care to do while he remained in such a menacing position, with such an attacking advantage—I dared not venture on a shot from where I was, and so there appeared nothing better for me to do than to wait and watch.

The old bear was in no hurry to leave. It seemed as if he knew he had matters all his own way, and I could almost fancy him saying to himself:

"Well, I have at last got one troublesome hunter in a snug place, and I intend to keep him there as long as it may suit my convenience and pleasure."

And his beastly pleasure was of serious duration to me—for he remained there for more than an hour, keeping me a vexed and anxious prisoner. I got up and moved up the hill a few feet to a large, stout shrub, where I would be in a better condition for defence, and hoping my change of position would alarm him and cause him to beat a hasty retreat; but instead of this it only appeared to excite his anger, for he growled more savagely, showed his formidable teeth, and more than once seemed on the point of coming down to me. In fact, he did once actually descend the hill some five or six feet, and I brought my rifle directly to bear upon him, though determined to reserve my fire till I should find myself in deadly peril, well knowing that if my shot should not at once prove fatal he would rush upon me, and both of us would go over the ledge together; but he seemed to think the risk was greater than the necessity for it, and finally turned back and resumed his former position. I confess I was several times tempted to fire and risk the consequences—and once I actually had a dead sight upon the region of his heart, with my gun cocked and finger on the trigger—but I allowed prudence to get the better of me at the critical point. It was so provoking to see the great, lazy fellow sitting there so coolly,

within a hundred feet, and in effect daring me to do my worst; but I reflected that my shot, if not suddenly fatal to him, would probably result in my own destruction; and so I wisely reserved my fire, and waited with what patience I could for him to move off or commence the attack.

At last he got up with a growl, showed me his teeth again, snuffed the air, walked along the edge of the plateau a few paces, stopped, took another look at me, growled and grinned again, and so kept on doing as long as he remained in sight. I did not change my position till he had disappeared, and then I made pretty quick time up the hill, muttering to myself:

"It's my turn now, old fellow, and it is my private opinion that you will pay pretty dearly for your impudence."

On reaching the plateau, I saw him at the distance of, perhaps, a hundred yards, deliberately making his way across the centre of the level, open wood. Had he not shown such a disposition to fight, I should have been very careful not to make any noise to alarm him; but, as it was, I shouted to attract his attention, thinking that would be the shortest way of getting near enough for a shot. I was right. No sooner did he hear my voice, than he stopped, turned round, and sat down on his haunches, as much as to say:

"Who's afraid? If you want anything of me, come on and I'll wait for you!"

Well, I did want something of him, and I went forward, but with a good deal of caution, for I knew I had an antagonist that was not to be despised. This time I intended to shoot; but that I might not be at his mercy in case of failing to kill him outright, I prepared myself for re-loading in haste, and also selected a tree which I could quickly climb in the event of finding myself hard pressed.

Being thus prepared, as I believed, for any emergency, I continued to advance slowly and steadily till not more than twenty yards divided us, when the bear rose upon his hind feet, with a savage growl, and a very angry, wicked look. I stopped, thinking myself quite near enough for safety, and took a deliberate aim at his head, between the eyes, with the view of piercing his brain and killing him on the spot. I fired and he fell—fell like a log, and lay still. I re-loaded my rifle, and then went up to him. He was large—very large—in fact, one of the largest bears I ever saw, and he seemed to be a cross between the common black bear and the grizzly. I felt proud of my conquest, and congratulated myself on having killed him at the first fire, since, if only dangerously wounded, he might have given me a good deal of trouble.

I walked around him, surveying him with delighted satisfaction, and pictured to myself the triumph with which I should carry home the trophy of his shaggy hide, and exhibit it to my friends with a feigned nonchalance, as if it were one of the most common results of my hunting adventures. Then I set my rifle against a tree, drew out my knife, and prepared myself to take off his skin.

But I had made a mistake—a terrible mistake. The bear, unfortunately for me, was not dead, only stunned. As I was on the point of stooping down near his head, he suddenly sprang upon his feet with a savage growl, and instantly reared upon his hind legs to take me in his embrace, and hug the life out of me.

I was so startled at this unexpected turn of affairs as to be almost paralyzed. I raised myself as quick as I could, and half jumped, half staggered back a couple of paces, when my foot slipped, and I came down upon one knee.

By the time I had regained my feet again the ferocious brute was upon me. There was no time then to run, not even to spring behind the nearest tree, against which my rifle was leaning. It was life and death now, and the horrid struggle instantly began.

With one terrible stroke of his right fore paw he raked down clothes and flesh from my left side in one or two places, tearing the latter almost to the bone, and then threw both paws around me, drew me up against him, and hugged me so that my breath left me, my tongue protruded from my mouth, my eyes seemed starting from their sockets, and I fancied every rib in me was crushed. Fortunately, both my arms were free, and in my night hand was my long hunting-knife.

Instinctively—for I cannot say whether it was the result of instinct or design in that awful moment—I grasped his throat with my left hand, and choked him in some degree, while with my right I vigorously and repeatedly plunged my knife into him. At the critical moment—the moment when, had all his strength remained, I am certain he would have squeezed the life out of me—I felt the muscles that bound me like hoops of iron begin to relax. I got a portion of my breath with a sensation of pain that made me shriek, and I redoubled my exertions, still thrusting my knife into

him, and still choking him with all the physical power there was left to me.

In this manner we came to the ground together, and rolled over and over, the bear still keeping me in his embrace, but not so tightly as at first—not so tightly but that now and then I could catch my breath. I could feel that he was getting weaker every moment—and for that matter, so was I—for both of us were bleeding freely, and all covered with gore; but I was encouraged to hope for life, and still used my knife upon his body, while he occasionally lacerated my flesh in a shocking and painful manner.

I do not know how long we were struggling together—it might have been five minutes, and it might have been fifteen; but it seemed an age to me. The end came at last, however, thank heaven! He fell over on his back, panting and gasping in the death struggle, his paws quivered and relaxed their hold, and I managed to roll out clear from him, almost as nearly dead as himself. He died and I fainted.

When consciousness returned, I looked around in bewilderment, and for some moments could not recollect who I was, where I was, nor how I came to be there. I was in a horrible condition. It seemed to me as if I was one mass of torn flesh and blood. When all had returned to my memory I glanced at the sun, and saw by its position in the heavens that I had lain there some hours.

I was weak and faint, and burning up with thirst. I attempted to get up and shrieked with pain. I was pinned down to the earth in a novel way. My lacerated flesh on the side I lay was pressed down among the grass, and the blood had stiffened by coagulation around the spires in such a glistening manner, that I had to stop and either break them off near the roots, or cautiously work them free, a matter which occupied me some half-hour. At last I was able to get myself into a sitting posture, but my head was dizzy, and I felt I was too weak to stand on my feet. The sun was declining, and I knew I was some four or five miles from the nearest dwelling. I was parched with thirst, there was fever in my veins, and by the route I should have to take to reach the river, the distance was scarcely less than half-a-mile. What was to be done? I was in a deplorable position truly. I felt I must soon reach water or die!

And how was I to get to any human habitation? Perhaps, after all, I should perish on the way! It was a terrible thought! I looked around at the bear, and saw that he was dead. I almost envied him. I looked at my rifle, but felt that I could not take it with me. If I could drag my bare body off, it was all I could hope to do. I set off crawling slowly on my hands and knees, and working my way forward with a good deal of pain. I was two hours getting over that half-mile of ground, often stopping to rest, and often on the point of fainting away.

I reached the river at last, just as the shades of night were stealing over the now to me, gloomy scene. I drank my fill, and felt somewhat refreshed. I washed my wounds, put the flesh together, and bound it up with the shreds of my garments as well as I could. It was by this time pitch dark. I made no attempt to go any further then. I crawled into some bushes, and laid there through the night—a long, horrible night to me! I heard the howlings of the wolves as they feasted upon my dead enemy.

Fortunately, they did not find me. The next morning at daylight, I resumed my slow journey—walking a little, crawling a little, and resting often.

In this way I reached a dwelling after mid-day, and was hospitably cared for. It was months, though, before I fully recovered from my encounter. A party of hunters went to the scene of my terrific fight, and brought away my rifle. Nothing then remained of the bear but his bones, and I never got even his skin. I was satisfied though, to find I had escaped with life. It was my last hunt!

THE Admiralty is going to have an iron screw steam fleet of great accommodation and great speed built immediately, so that a little army could be sent to India presto if needs be. That there may be a need is evinced by the thought, as thought never comes to those regions without a strong hint from without.

It is stated that England has recommended the nomination of the Duke of Augustenburg to the German Duchies, that Prussia has offered to restore Danish Schleswig to Denmark, if France will consent to her swallowing up the remainder, and that Austria has agreed to consent to annexation provided Glaz, a county in Silesia of 158 square miles, is granted to her in return.

The remnants of the old pair of columns of the 13th Regiment of Foot have been placed in the nave of Wells Cathedral, immediately over the entrance by the west door, from their being the colours of the First Somersetshire Regiment. The regiment is also

called "Prince Albert's Regiment of Light Infantry," and its present Colonel is General Sir William Gomm, a Waterloo hero. The Royal, or first colour, which originally was about 6½ by 6 feet, made of silk, with a blue ground, an Imperial crown, the number of the regiment, and the union cross of St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick, now presents a very tattered, worn, and shot-torn appearance, being scarcely two feet square.

THEODORA'S TRIAL.

THEODORA NELSON stood in the centre of her room. She was doing nothing; it seemed to her she was thinking of nothing. But a kind of soundless voice within her, kept repeating over and over again the last words Mr. Granger had said to her: "It is an offer, Miss Nelson, which you would do well to give some thought to."

By-and-by she began to think of the time at which she had first entered that house. Homeless, friendless, almost hopeless, she had applied to Mr. Granger, for a situation as governess to his little daughter, just left motherless. She had no faith that she would obtain the situation, for she brought with her no introduction from others; she had no introduction; she possessed nothing but her capability and earnestness.

She had been shown into the library just at dusk. Through the glimmer of picture frames and the shine of polished walnut, she made out that the room was unoccupied, and sat down to wait. The faint firelight only showed how rich the place was, and it was very quiet. There was a study-chair drawn upon the hearth-rug, a book open in a reading-rack, a profusion of papers upon a table near by, and a watch ticking gently among them. The comfortable ticking of the watch sounded with the wailing wind beyond the window drapery's warm folds. She listened to both in a half stupor caused by the weariness of breasting the rough weather.

Suddenly, without a sound, the door swung open softly, and a gentleman entered, went across the soft carpet and turned up the gas. Then he turned to her, saying courteously:

"Do you wish to see me?"

"Mr. Granger?"

"Yes."

She was impressed as never before with the perfect gentleness of a gentleman. She made known her errand, and waited patiently under his kind but comprehensive eyes.

Looking at Theodora Nelson, Mr. Granger thought that here was one woman, at least, who had no thought for his being rich and eligible. It was a relieving thought after certain experiences he had known during the past month. He said:

"I think we will try each other, Miss Nelson."

The words were a shock of pleasure to Theodora; she was so tired, the place was so restful, and she was not sure where she should lay her head that night. It was comfort and peace opening suddenly before her, a place where she could drop her burden of care, and be kindly enfolded in an atmosphere of peace. She did not know that Mr. Granger saw her eyes full of tears as they parted.

How much had happened since that night! Epilepsy after epilepsy swept across her mental vision. The first beautifully served meal which she ate in the pretty breakfast room, the first glimpse of Lora Granger's fair, little face, the dainty chamber assigned her, in which she could not at first sleep for comfort! Many a night she had lain watching the play of the red firelight upon the white ceiling, unwilling to go to sleep because no dream could be so happy as the waking reverie. She never lost her pleasure in these things, familiar as taste and luxury became to her daily life.

She thought of the first Christmas that she had lived there, and of the grateful pleasure which swelled her heart when Mr. Granger put into her hand a tiny Florentine watch: while the next instant little Lora sprang forward with a beautifully cut cameo—her gift. Why, she had never had a Christmas present before in all her life!

She thought of a night when Lora had been taken dangerously ill with the croup, and how, as if the child were her own flesh and blood, she had watched and prayed with the father.

She remembered evenings in the beautiful old library, so quiet and bright!—morning drives, pleasant forenoon, study hours, music lessons, given in the long parlours, where Mr. Granger walked the floor, bared as thought, an agreeable supernumerary. He roused up sometimes to see what they were laughing at; but he was usually absent-minded.

That his thoughts were not always pleasant, Theodora came to know. There was a sore place in his life which he brooded over.

At first she supposed it to be the loss of his wife; but respectfully as he mentioned to Lora her dead

mother, he never showed for the child, nor for himself, a sense of great loss. In a man fine-natured and tender-hearted as was Curtis Granger, this was strange.

Theodora did not know how it was that she came to understand that she was capable of bringing pleasure to Lora's father. But she felt that he was happiest in the evenings when they three were alone, and she was in the mood to laugh and talk freely. In those times Mr. Granger would kindle into a quiet brilliancy utterly alien to him at all other periods.

A sympathy had grown up between them which not one person in a hundred would appreciate rightly. Theodora felt a generous desire to please Mr. Granger. With the utmost frankness she consulted his tastes, silently discovering that whatever his evening engagements were, he liked to chat with her for an hour after tea: she made it a point to be at leisure then.

Once, in a half-absent way, he told Lora that when she was a woman she must wear her hair as Miss Nelson had arranged hers that day, and herself liking the artistic effect of the soft loops, they became Theodora's habit.

Knowing that he admired the white cameo he had selected for Lora's gift, it clasped the throat of her wrapper always of a morning. Observing that his eye expressed approval of a soft gray silk she possessed, she often wore it.

The motive in all this was gratitude, and an unconscious love. She would have cut off her right hand if it would have given Mr. Granger any pleasure. His gloom was the sorrow of her life. When she won him from it for an hour she was happy.

So two years had passed, and no daughter in the home of a father was happier than was this orphan girl.

Then a certain guest came often to the house. He was a Dr. Lamington, one of the ablest practitioners of the town—a man of talent who was rapidly amassing a fortune. He had seen Theodora first at the bedside of little Lora, when the child had an attack of illness.

He became interested in her—paid court to her—finally offered her his heart and hand. Then it was that Mr. Granger had said:

"It is an offer, Miss Nelson, which you would do well to give some thought to."

How gravely and coolly he had said it—and what a shock to her there was in his quiet words. Theodora started from her stupor, and cast herself down upon a lounge.

It was the crisis of her life. Alone in her chamber she commenced the struggle which should decide her destiny.

She faced the bare, painful fact that she loved Mr. Granger. She loved him as the source of all her life's happiness. And his words had shown her the gulf between them. However kindly his gentleness met hers, they were socially at a distance. She never thought of such things, but she knew that Mr. Granger did, that he valued his patrician blood—patrician in the highest sense of the word; it was blood kept pure from a taint of vice through a dozen generations. A hot flush came to Theodora's cheek as she thought of her father. No, her ancestors, were not her benefactors, and Mr. Granger would not marry his governess, even if he loved her.

The fine, grave, dark face came up before her. She dropped her face upon her arm, murmuring:

"I would die for him!—ah, I would die for him!"

Her happiness was all past. The late event had broken apart the invisible tie which bound her to her love. It would never be the same again. She could not stay there.

Where should she go?

For the first time the thought came—"Why not marry Dr. Lamington?"

The pretty chamber was still but for the ticking of the little watch which had been her Christmas gift. The red firelight played upon the white ceiling, the picture frames glittered upon the wall, a tiny marble "Mercury" glimmered in a corner. Theodora lay still and thought.

Night came, and pressed a heavy blackness against the windows; the fire died down. Theodora arose, shivering. Two hours had passed.

"I have decided," she said.

A certain lightness was upon her, though she had decided to go out into the world, homeless, upon the next day.

She went down stairs and softly opened the library door. Mr. Granger looked up from his book.

"Well, Miss Nelson?"

"I have decided, Mr. Granger."

"About Lamington? Well, how, may I ask?"

"I shall not marry him."

Mr. Granger sat looking quietly at the fire in the grate.

"Are you sure that you comprehend the advantages of his offer?" he said, at last.

"I am sure that I do not love him. I do not need to know any more."

There was a silence.

"Mr. Granger?"

"Well?"

"I find it desirable to change my position. My quarter is finished to-morrow, and I shall be obliged to leave you then."

He bowed; she spoke in a tone which required no more. Then she turned to the door. She had opened it when she heard her name pronounced as she had never heard it pronounced before.

"Theodora."

She looked back.

"Will you come here?" Mr. Granger said, putting out his hand.

Unconsciously she went to him.

He took her hands and drew her down to a little footstool at his side.

"Theodora," he said, softly, "will you not stay here as my wife?"

"Do you love me?" she asked, timidly and simply.

"I love you, Theodora, as I never loved before in my life!"

The blessed words. She clung to him with a little cry.

"Do you know how happy I am?" he said. "Do you know what you have done for me? I will not talk of the past, Theodora—it is not a pleasing subject; but for so long I have needed an assurance! My sweet child, how many times I have wished that you loved me! my life has been so bitter and barren! I had dreams sometimes, but I would not yield to them; why should you love me, a gloomy, middle-aged man? Yet you were such a comfort! Then this offer of Lamington's came. I made the decision that if you did not love him, and withstood the advantage of his offer, that I should know your heart to be more true than any heart I ever before found in my life. Then I would win you if I could. Ah, my darling, your frank eyes betrayed you, to-night, when you made your voice so cold. You love me as I love you, my treasure!"

The crisis of her life was passed, and she was at rest.

E. S. K.

SCIENCE.

A LARGE contract for the supply of india-rubber telegraph wires has lately been taken by Messrs. Wells and Hall, for foreign lines, partly overland and partly submarine. The rate at which these wires are now being supplied dispels the idea that slowness of manufacture has prevented the development of india-rubber insulation. There seems no reason why an india-rubber cone for any length of cable should not be produced with as much despatch as any other description. The above firm are delivering about thirty miles of wire per week, but their machinery is capable of turning out above fifty miles per week.

PAPER-MAKING IN FRANCE.—The agitation created among French paper-makers in consequence of the reduction of the duty on rags exported has, it is said, greatly subsided after a close examination of the facts of the case. French paper manufactures consume annually about 100,000,000 kilogrammes of rags, worth from 45f. to 60f. the 100 kilogrammes, and of these very little is imported. The protectionists induced the Legislature to prohibit the exportation, but recent treatise of commerce put an end to the prohibition, and, except the payment of a duty of 12f. the 100 kilogrammes, which will be reduced to 9 francs on the 1st of January, 1866, to 6 francs on the 1st of January, 1868, and to 4 francs on the 1st of January, 1869, there is no obstacle in the export of rags. According to the returns published by the Director of Customs, the following is the weight and value of the rags exported during the last five years:—1860, 586,623 kilogrammes, value 354,649f.; 1861, 2,270,971 kilogrammes, value 1,249,934f.; 1862, 4,161,265 kilogrammes, value 2,288,696f.; 1863, 7,171,140 kilogrammes, value 9,040,579f.; 1864, 8,010,715 kilogrammes, value 10,809,606f. It might be presumed from these figures, that France exported during the last two years, a quantity of rags equivalent to 7 or 8 per cent. of the amount required by paper manufacturers at home; but such is not the fact. The customs' returns comprise the drills, or woollen rags, which are not used in the manufacture of paper. When these are subtracted it will be found that the rags suited to paper manufacturers, exported in the year 1863, amounted to 2,877,801 kilogrammes, and the value to 453,901f.; and in 1864 to 2,820,868 kilogrammes, value 429,912f. The removal of the prohibition has not, consequently, deprived French paper-makers of more than 3 per cent. of the rags they use. The removal of the prohibition has, however, put an end to a great deal of smuggling on the coasts of Brittany and Normandy, and by which means more rags were sent out of the country than are now legally

exported. French paper manufacturers have now resolved to petition the Senate to recommend the abolition of all duty on the export of rags, provided all other nations in Europe would do the same. The paper-makers are likewise agitating in a more practical manner. They have established depôts in the less affluent quarters of Paris, such as the 18th and 19th arrondissements, where rags are sorted and washed. Persons employed to collect rags for these depôts will prevent the destruction of an article hitherto so much despised.

The examination of her Majesty's steam storeship *Buffalo*, has recently been made in dry-dock for the purpose of ascertaining the efficiency of Mr. Leete's plan of preserving iron ships by means of a sheathing of plates of coarse glass. The *Buffalo* has been more than twelve months afloat, and has stood the test of some severe weather. The surface of the glass was totally free from animalcules, sea-weed, barnacles, or incrustations of any kind. On the removal of three of the plates, the parts thus protected were found exempt from corrosion, and appeared in as good a state of preservation as when the experimental sheathing was applied in December, 1865. The plates, which were bolted on over a solution of gutta-percha, were so firmly attached that, after the removal of the bolts, they required the hammer and wedge to remove them. It is stated the invention is about to be applied to the new iron ship *Affidavite*, in course of construction at the Millwall Ironworks for the Italian Government.

ALLOYS OF SILVER.—The increasing rarity of silver lately induced the French Government to form an alloy for monetary purposes, consisting of 835 parts of silver, and 165 parts of copper, and pieces 50 centimes, with the figures 835 stamped upon them, are actually in circulation. The fabrication presents no difficulty, the malleability is nearly the same, and the slight yellowish tinge can only be detected by rigid comparison. M. Eugene Peligot has been making experiments, with the view of substituting zinc for copper in the alloy. The process employed is very simple, and the results of combination in various proportions are said to be very satisfactory. The fusibility of the new alloys is greater than that of the alloys of silver and copper; they are very sonorous, elastic, and malleable, and no verigris is formed by contact with acids. The most economic method of restoring the coinage would be the employment of the old silver in the new alloy. One per cent. of zinc is already employed in the French copper coinage, and this small proportion suffices to give qualities to the coinage which copper does not possess. The small Swiss coins made at Paris contain zinc associated with copper, nickel, and silver. M. Peligot has formed alloys in the following proportions:—Silver 950, zinc 50; silver 900, zinc 100; silver 800, zinc 200. Ternary alloys—silver 900, copper 50, zinc 50; silver 800, zinc 100, copper 100; silver 835, copper 93, zinc 72.

POWER OF THE MAGNET.—The smallest natural magnet generally possesses the greatest proportion of attractive power. The magnet worn by Sir Isaac Newton in his ring weighed only three grains, yet it was able to take up 746 grains, or nearly 250 times its weight; whereas, magnets weighing two pounds seldom lift more than five or six times their own weight. Iron is the only substance principally attracted by the magnet. The degree of magnetic attraction depends on the strength of the magnet itself, the weight and shape of the iron presented to it, the magnetic or unmagnetic state of the body, and the distance between them. All iron bars standing erect or perpendicularly (such as the iron railings before houses) are magnetic, the north pole being at the bottom, and the south at the top. It is also a curious fact that the uppermost part of the iron ring round a carriage-wheel attracts the north end of the magnet, and is, consequently a south pole, while the lower part of the same iron, in contact with the ground, attracts the south end of the needle, and is, therefore, a north pole. Turn the wheel round half a circle, and the poles immediately become reversed. The power of magnetic attraction resides wholly in the surface of the iron bodies, and is independent of the mass. An empty bomb-shell will attract as strongly as a solid sphere of the same material. The cutters in gun-boring become magnetic in consequence of being continually rubbed in the same direction. Wedgewood's black ware, which is made of basalt, attracts the magnet strongly.

FACETIE.

FRANKLIN, on hearing the remark that what was lost on earth went to the moon, asserted that there must be a deal of good advice accumulated there.

WONDERFUL, IF TRUE.—A pamphlet is just published which broaches the marvellous theory that "a man is what a woman makes him." According to the

author's dictum, we presume that when a wife makes her husband a pudding, HE is a pudding.

A MAN that marries a widow is bound to give up smoking. If she gives up the weeds for him, he should give up the weed for her.

THE shop-keepers of Washington are not remarkable for sharpness. A couple of infantry officers took a walk down the Avenue a few days ago, and passed off patent medicine labels as five dollar greenbacks—to the amount of three hundred dollars—without being detected.

WOMAN'S RIGHT.

(A Billet to BARGENT.)

DEAREST, could I use a warmer

Word, I would, John Bright, yet oh!

But a half and half reformer,

Far enough thou dost not go,

Manhood's right to the elective

Suffrage thou proclaim'st due;

Why, with logic so defective,

Womanhood's assert not too?

Voteless, working men contented

Should not rest, they're told by thee.

Tell us why, unrepresented,

Working women ought to be.

If ancient information

Is no hindrance in men's way

To share in legislation,

We are quite as wise as they.

Saw, plane, chisel, are they better

Than the wash-tub and the churn?

If the pickaxe you unfetter,

Let the mangle have a turn.

Oh, John, you should get on faster!

Woman's equal rights proclaim!

Treat the mistress like the master.

Won't you? Naughty man, for shame!

Punch.

SCOTCH GENEALOGY.—A dispute arose between Campbell and McLean upon the subject of genealogy. McLean would not allow that the Campbells had any right to rank with the McLeans in antiquity, who, he insisted, were in existence as a clan from the beginning of the world. Campbell had a little more biblical lore than his antagonist, and asked him if the clan of McLean was before the flood. "Flood! which flood?" said McLean. "The flood, you know, that drowned all the world but Noah, and his family, and his flocks," said Campbell. "Pooh! you and your floods!" said McLean, my clan was afore the flood." "I have not read in any bible," said Campbell, of "the name of McLean going into Noah's ark." "Noah's ark!" retorted the other, in contempt; "who ever heard of a McLean that had not a boat of his own."

YOUR OWN LITTLE BLACK.

AIN'T I black enough to be cared for?

I'm not a black nigger, 'tis true,

As armies and fleets is prepared for,

And missionaries is sent to,

But I'm black as dirt can well make me,

And if, by the look of my skin,

You'd nigh for a blackamoor take me,

I ain't not much lighter within.

Although I'm no nigger, I look it,

And haven't been no better taught

Than, seein' a Bobby, to hook it.

In course, to avoid bein' caught.

We're very much like one another,

We are, arter all's said and done.

If he is a man and a brother,

Why, ain't I a boy and a son?

And has to be place in creation,

No doubt but my own is the same,

Young monkey without eddication;

And who is the parties to blame?

But while, for all washin' and rubbin',

The nigger a nigger will be,

Your honours, with some little scrubbin',

May make a white Christian of me.—Punch.

UNACCOUNTABLE.—Not quite a hundred years ago a gentleman having an invention of great importance to the navy wished to lay it before the Board of Admiralty, and being anxious to avoid the slough of circumlocution in which so many valuable improvements get hopelessly mired, he resolved to go at once to head-quarters. His position in society and introductions gave him access to each of the six Lords of the Admiralty, so he waited upon A., doubtless the First Lord. The matter was fully discussed, and seemed to take the fancy of Lord A., who promised to recommend it to the board. He next saw Lord B., and, without mentioning that he had seen Lord A., introduced his invention. Lord B. appeared even more favourable than Lord A. Being a nautical man himself, he said he had long felt the necessity for such an arrangement, and congratulated the inventor on

the opportuneness of his appearance. He also promised to recommend it to the board. C., D., E., and F., were each waited upon in turn, and each severally promised his influence. Elated with his success, the inventor wrote to the secretary, formally submitting his invention for consideration, and at the end of ten days the usual foolscap letter came to hand. He tore open the seal, and read with utter amazement:—"Sir,—With reference to your letter of the ———, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that they have caused your invention to be carefully examined, and their lordships do not consider it preferable to arrangements that have been already adopted in H— Majesty's ships.—I am, sir, your very humble servant, C. P. HEAD.—Thom. Fool, Esq., Diddlehim."—Furious with rage the inventor rushed to Lord A., who assured him that, though personally favourable to his invention, he was only one at the board, where such matters are always decided by vote. He had voted for him, and really was very sorry, but could not help it, in similar terms "My Lords" B., C., D., E., and F. told the same story. The chief value of the above is that (with the exception of the names) it is strictly correct.

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

Miss Wormwood.—"Mr. A., why do you gentlemen always run your hands through the hair, when you take your hats off?"

Mr. Alox.—"Miss W., why do you ladies always push your hoops back, and shake your dresses, when rising from a chair?"

A DUTCHMAN being asked how many times he shaved, replied: "Three times a week, every day but Sunday; den I shaves every day."

AN exchange says, that if every man's breast could be looked into, there you would find the image of some woman. If you look in the bosom of the ladies, you will find a daguerreotype of Charley, a port-monnaie, and a paper of needles, besides two or three billet-doux.

IN the company of young people the other day at a country tavern, a man was saying that the Italians had no "v" in their language. "How, then," demanded one of the company, with a mingled air of triumph and contempt, "do such claps as them spell *vacon*?"

AN old man, rather elevated, bought a pair of new shoes, and in order to save their soles, walked home barefoot. He had not walked far, before his toe was brought too near to a large stone, (considering the latter was the harder of the two). He received a severe blow, and began limping across the street, shoe in hand, groaning out, "Oh! how glad I am I hadn't my new shoes on!"

AFTER the Imperial Speech at the opening of the Chambers, the Prince Imperial advanced towards his mother, and offered her his hand to escort her from the Salle des Etats. "No, no," retorted the Empress—"vous êtes encore trop petit." Whereupon this precious young gentleman went up to his papa and shook hands with him, saying, "Ma foi, sire, vous avez fait là un beau discours"—a compliment at which the Emperor was rather taken aback.

SPEAKING GRAMMATICALLY.—"Waiter, is my chicken broiling?" "No, sir, the cook is." "I didn't order the cook. He is too tough." How will you have it done?" "Why, I want it broiled, to be sure." "That he is doing, sir." "But you said he was broiling himself." "So he is, but he is not being broiled." "Well, Mr. Waiter (rising and bowing reverently) may I ask your high grammaticularity, is my chicken being broiled?"

SHARP PRACTICE TO OBTAIN A WEALTHY WIFE.—The Cleveland Plaindealer mentions the case of a well-dressed young man of good manners who gave in his income to the Assessors at several thousand dollars, paid the tax, and had the pleasure of seeing his name in the list among the nabobs of the country. On the strength of this he courted a wealthy man's daughter and married her. Then it was found out that he had no money, and had sold his mother's watch to pay the income tax. The Government made a good thing out of it, so did the young man.

UNRAVELLING.—A man coming home late one night, a little more than "half-sens over," feeling thirsty, procured a glass of water and drank it. In doing so, he swallowed a small ball of silk that lay in the bottom of the tumbler; the end catching in his mouth, and not knowing what it was, he began pulling at the end; and, the little ball unravelling, he soon had several feet in his hands, and still no end apparently. Terrified, he shouted at the top of his voice: "Wife! wife! I say, come here! I am unravelling!"

A FORMER Duke of Northumberland, holding high office in the State, had become somehow obnoxious to the City folks and Corporation of London, and had received some insult from that quarter, in the discharge of what he deemed his duty to the country at

large. What was his revenge? He simply persevered in putting British interests before those east of Temple Bar, but the Percy lion, which formerly looked in that direction, had his head forthwith turned towards Westminster Abbey, and his tail to this day indicates from what point the Duke had received unmerited contumely.

A WARNING TO YOUNG LADIES.—Never set your heart on a Doctor. He can only love by fits and starts.—*Punch*.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.—A Cambridge Undergraduate is informed that Pale-on-tology has nothing to do with the works of the author of the *Evidences of Christianity*.—*Punch*.

OF WHAT KIND OF WOOD IS THE POOR LAW BOARD MADE?—*Supposed* to be lignum vitae, or the wood of life. No doubt it is to a certain extent; but we should say it is rather hard living.—*Fun*.

STAMPED UNDER FOOT.—The Russians, by way of trying to stamp out the last embers of the Polish revolution have abolished the Polish postage stamp and command the use of the Russian article. Well, the Czar has taken off so many Polish heads already that this is hardly a matter of wonder. If he could only put Russian heads on Polish shoulders as well as Polish letters, Warsaw would soon be really in a state of tranquillity.—*Fun*.

It appears to us when reading over Lord Spencer's plan for the enclosure of Wimbledon Common, that his lordship is easily alarmed, and dreads meeting the witches of *Macbeth*. In one of his *Midsummer Night's Dreams* he decided to remove the gipsies, and turn the much valued common into a park. He has, however, in his proposal—now become a *Winter's Tale*—made *Nock* do about nothing. His lordship in his first announcement declared his desire to benefit the public, the copyholders, and the neighbours. He could best do so by saying, "As You Like It," and banish the feeling which provails of *Love's Labour Lost*. Lord Spencer's has in his proposal appeared to give *Measure for Measure*. This does but excite a *Tempest*, especially in the *Hamlet* of Roehampton. If he withdraws his intention to enclose and to sell parts of the common, he can have all the improvements he desires; he will make a nobler gift to the public, and the world will say, *All's Well that Ends Well*.—*Fun*.

STATISTICS.

POPULATION OF GREAT BRITAIN.—In the year 1864 there were 739,763 children born in England, and 69,330 persons died; in Scotland there were 112,445 born, and 74,303 died. The birth-rate in England was at the rate of 3.56 per cent. on the estimated population; in Scotland, 3.60 per cent.; and the death-rate was 2.38 per cent. in England, and 2.35 in Scotland. Both birth-rate and death-rate were high, and above the average. The natural increase of the population in the year, by excess of births over deaths, was 244,243 in England, and 38,142 in Scotland; in Great Britain therefore 282,385. But there were 73,365 Englishmen or Scotchmen among the 208,900 emigrants from the United Kingdom in the year. The population of England in the middle of the year 1864 is estimated at about 20,772,000; of Scotland, 3,118,700; of Great Britain therefore 23,890,700—an increase of 762,182 since the census of April, 1861.

THE ARMY ESTIMATES FOR THE YEAR 1865-6.—They set forth a prospective diminution of charge for the coming year of 874,639*l*. Last year the total amount voted was 14,844,088*l*, from which a sum of 1,204,442*l* for extra receipts being deducted, the expenditure appeared as 13,639,646*l*. This year the sum to be asked for amounts to 14,348,447*l*; while the estimated amount extra receipts is 1,206,419*l*, reducing the prospective expenditure to 13,645,067*l*. The saving is to be made with the effective services, for which 12,241,647*l* will be asked, as against 12,737,931*l* last year. For the non-effective services 2,106,157*l* were voted last year; this year the sum estimated for this division is 2,106,800*l*, a slight increase, which appears to have resulted from the greater number of reduced and retired officers and out-pensioners who have become chargeable on the lists, as well as from a small amount more than last year estimated as rewards for military service; in other categories of this class a saving is set forth—viz., pay of general officers, widows' pensions, &c., pensions to wounded officers, superannuation allowances, and disembodied militia. In the effective services there will be a decrease, for the general staff and regimental pay of 274,416*l*; commissariat and movement of troops, 113,247*l*; clothing and supplies, 22,438*l*; barrack establishment, 1,265*l*; divine service, 1,098*l*; martial law, 14,249*l*; medical establishment, 15,672*l*; enrolled pensioners and army reserve, 3,580*l*; manufacturing department 131*l*; warlike stores, 87,519*l*; military education, 10,382*l*;

miscellaneous services, 15,403*l*; and administration of the army, 10,584*l*; while on the following there will be an increase:—Disembodied militia, 2,617*l*; yeomanry, 3,914*l*; volunteers, 6,640*l*; and for superintending establishment and expenditure for works, buildings, and repairs at home and abroad, 60,530*l*. The several sums to be asked for in both classes are as follow:—General staff and regimental pay, 3,434,567*l*; commissariat and movement of troops, 1,265,800*l*; clothing establishments, 574,256*l*; barrack establishment, 609,900*l*; divine service, 44,335*l*; martial law, 26,300*l*; medical establishment, 246,544*l*; disembodied militia, 786,400*l*; yeomanry, 91,000*l*; volunteers, 834,900*l*; enrolled pensioners and army reserve, 46,000*l*; manufacturing departments, 972,900*l*; warlike stores, 485,000*l*; superintending establishment of, and expenditure for, works, buildings, repairs, 811,400*l*; military education, 163,500*l*; surveys of the United Kingdom, 88,345*l*; miscellaneous, 107,700*l*; administration of the army, 212,800*l*; rewards for military service, 26,100*l*; pay of general officers, 74,200*l*; reduced and retired officers, 455,000*l*; widows' pensions, &c., 162,100*l*; wounded officers, 28,200*l*; in-pension, 33,200*l*; out-pension, 1,168,000*l*; superannuation, 131,900*l*; and disembodied militia, 29,000*l*. The general staff, regimental, and military educational establishments will number this year 142,477 men, as against 146,766 last year—a decrease of 4,289; while the native Indian troops employed on the British establishment will be reduced from 1,582 men last year to 178 men.

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

A MOTHER'S love, with angel-wing

Above the infant cradle spread—

A pure, a heaven-born, holy thing,

Recalls the past, out-lives the dead.

A mother's love in early youth,

Screened from temptation's burning way;

And, with its living seal of truth,

Impressed the heart as melting day.

A mother's love when fever's fire

Shot through each nerve with thrilling pain,

Spoke gently as an angel lyre—

Oh, might I hear the word again!

A mother's love in darksome days

So softly wipes the tear away,

That as on her dear face we gaze,

We dream of Heaven's unclouded ray.

Oh, there is naught in life's lone path

That binds us to the throne above.

Through blissful hours or times of wrath,

Changeless and pure as mother's love.

M. J. B.

GEMS.

A YOUNG lover, even when love is most prosperous,
loses heart.

Love that has nothing but beauty to keep it in
health is short-lived.

AGE is venerable in man—and would be in woman
if she ever became old.

A GOOD many doctors are alchemists enough to
turn mercury to gold.

THERE is no disguise which can long conceal love
where it does, or feign where it does not, exist.

THOSE who speak without reflection often remember
their own words afterwards with sorrow.

ALL pleasures, not contrary to the course of nature,
may be made the promoters and the instruments of
virtue.

THE man who lives in vain lives worse than in
vain. He who lives to no purpose lives to a bad purpose.

It is better to sow a young heart with generous
thoughts and deeds than a field with corn, since the
heart's harvest is perpetual.

GOOD nature is the very air of a great mind, the
sign of a large and generous soul, and the peculiar
soil on which virtue prospers.

It is a great blunder in the pursuit of happiness
not to know that we have got it—that is, not to be
content with a reasonable and possible measure of it.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CURE OF CONSUMPTION.—It has been found that if
this terrible disease has not arrived at its last stage,
it may be certainly cured by the constant and continued
use of a pap made with the flower of maize of
good quality—this is essential. An eminent French
physician, who has had most experience on the subject,
recommends that, on the first decided appearance

of the malady, the pap should be made to constitute
the principal part of the food. It is to be prepared
by adding the maize flour to a mixture of half milk
and half water. This is to be kept stirred on the fire
until it boils—after which, the fire is to be rendered
less intense by the addition of cinfers, and the pap is
to be left on it for eight or ten minutes, but without
being stirred. It is then to be taken from the fire,
and a little salt is to be put in it. If the patient cannot
take milk, broth may be substituted for it, or
water—butter being added; but milk is best.

PRESERVATION OF EGGS BY COLLODION.—Professor
Church, of the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester,
has informed us of an exceedingly elegant and
effective manner of preserving eggs. This method,
though, perhaps, too expensive to be carried into
general practice, illustrates so perfectly the statements.
The plan consists in varnishing each egg
over with collo-dion, which is a solution of gun-cotton
in ether, used in photography. This dries instantly,
and leaves behind a thin film, perfectly impervious to
moisture. Eggs prepared in this way were found to
remain quite fresh for a period of seven or eight months.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE use of a secret cypher is authorized in private
telegraphic communications throughout Belgium.

THE Blackfriars Bridge is, by Royal permission, to
be named the Alexandra.

WARSAW is no longer to be the capital of the
Ozar in Poland, but a fortified town called Modline,
which bristles inside and out with cannon.

WE may inform the lovers of art that M. Aguado
will sell, in April next, in Paris, a splendid Murillo,
entitled "The Death of Saint Claire."

A PARLIAMENTARY return shows that during 1863
the number of floggings inflicted in the navy was
752, involving a total of 25,513 lashes.

THE Lambeth Industrials have been honoured by a
visit of the Prince of Wales to the Exhibition, who
bought a perambulator.

MR. E. B. DENISON, Q.C., is now engaged in making
the necessary drawings and plans for a new clock,
to be second only to Westminster in power, for Worcester
Cathedral.

HER MAJESTY'S state carriage is now nearly a century
old. It was built for George III.; its beautiful
panels were painted by Cipriani, and its cost is
said to have amounted to the enormous sum of
£27,000.

A VOTE of thanks has been passed by the Senate of
the Confederate States to Mr. John Lancaster, owner
of the yacht *Deerhound*, for his courage and humanity
in saving the lives of Captain Semmes and his officers
from the sinking Alabama.

A CORRESPONDENT mentions the probability that the
Mount Cenis tunnel will be completed sooner than
was expected, the workmen having come upon softer
rock than that with which they have hitherto met.
1868 is named as the time of opening for traffic.

EXPLOSIONS.—There have been forty-eight explosions
during the year 1864, causing the death of 75
persons, and injury of 120 others. In two cases two
boilers exploded simultaneously, so that the total
number of boilers exploded was fifty.

It has been discovered that the last census of
Liverpool was an erroneous one to the extent of
20,000 inhabitants, who were forgotten to be told off.
Not one of them ever, it appears, alluded to the fact, as
there was nothing to be got by so doing.

It is said that the Emperor of Mexico has sent a
protest to England, France, and Belgium against the
Emperor of Austria's speech, which referred to the
Emperor Maximilian having given up his right of
eventual succession to the Throne of Austria.

THE Emperor of the French thinks before he speaks.
A longer time scarcely any one has, as a rule, allowed
to elapse between the question and the answer. M. de
Nigra having recently made some remarks upon the
condition of Rome, his Majesty said, "I have two
years to reply to you."

THE Russians proudly announce to the world that
there is sometimes sun in St. Petersburg on a winter's
day, as the admiralty has established a twelve
o'clock cannon upon the building, which is fired like
the Palais Royal gun, receiving a sunstroke at that
hour.

Six colliers of the Grand Order of Mexico, which
are to be presented to six Sovereigns, are being
manufactured by a large firm here. The collier is
composed of two massive chains of gold, kept apart by
several large M's and a crown, alternating with the
Mexican eagle. Four very large emeralds make the
Order very valuable and valued.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

D. H.—The lines are declined with thanks.

FELIX F.—We regret that we cannot avail ourselves of the poem.

JAMES.—The lines on the "Four Seasons" are declined with thanks. (See also reply to "R. F.")

WILLIAM E. W.—The lines are considerably below our standard, and are declined with thanks.

M. E. M. O.—We cannot reply to correspondents using the indefinite signatures of "Constant Reader," or "Constant Subscriber."

J. L. K.—Members of Parliament are only privileged from arrest during the session of Parliament, and for forty days before and after it.

Z. Z.—A business man, forty-eight years of age, would like to meet with a lady not under thirty, with a view to marriage. The lady must not object to superintending a business.

J. V. D., who is twenty-one years of age, with dark hair and eyes, with good prospects, would like to correspond with a young lady of about the same age, with a view to matrimony.

J. O., a widower, forty years of age, 5 feet 8 in. in height, fair, and good tempered, would be glad to again enter the estate of matrimony; a lady between thirty and forty years of age preferred, and if a widow, *tant mieux*.

C. R.—The numbers of the "DATA" JOURNAL may be procured separately. Covers for binding THE LONDON READER can be obtained at the office, or by order through any bookseller.

R. B.—You must bring a suit for nullity of marriage in the Divorce Court. If you marry without doing so, notwithstanding your wife's desertion, such marriage would be illegal and void.

J. L. G.—A positive cure for corns is an application of the strongest acetic acid. A camel's hair brush must be applied, and in a few days the corn, whether hard or soft, will disappear.

WILLIAM S. would be happy to correspond with a young lady, who must be a singer and fond of music, with a view to matrimony. He is tall, has dark eyes, brown hair, whiskers and moustaches, and is in trade.

ERENA.—Yes; reading much by artificial light is injurious to the eyesight. In reading, place the light behind you, so that the rays may pass over your shoulder to the book, which will relieve the eyes.

X. Y. Z.—*Paper-mâché* articles should be washed with cold water and a sponge (without soap), and while damp, sprinkled with flour, and then polished with a flannel. (The handwriting is not good.)

B. F.—You can make a lotion for the removal of freckles thus:—Muriate of ammonia, half a drachm; lavender water, two drachms; distilled water, half a pint. The lotion should be applied with a sponge two or three times daily.

E. S. M.—Shrove Tuesday was so called because in Roman times it was usual to confess on that day, which act was expressed by the Saxon word *shrove* or *shrova*. It was formerly a day of extraordinary sport and feasting, an apprentices' holiday, &c.

C. T.—Actions of debt, or any lending without a special contract, must be brought within six years; actions of debt or covenant upon deeds may be brought within twenty years. You should apply to the registrar of the county court, whence the judgment summons issued.

1865.—Only persons who are candidates for employment under Government are required to pass an official examination. Railway companies being under private management, you must apply to the general manager of the particular line on which you wish to be engaged.

H. W.—A good preparation for effacing writing ink is obtained by mixing two drachms of the solution of muriate of tin with four drachms of water. It should be applied with a camel's hair brush. (The handwriting is bold and clear, but rather deficient in symmetrical formation of the letters.)

G. T.—Sorters, letter-carriers, and messengers in the General Post Office are required to pass only a very simple examination—to write their own names and addresses, read the addresses of letters, and add a few figures together. Applications must be made at St. Martin's-le-Grand.

C. J., who is twenty-three years of age, and 5 ft. in height, with good prospects, would like a matrimonial introduction to a young lady about twenty years of age, of fair complexion, respectably connected, well educated, and thoroughly domesticated. *Carte de visite* to be exchanged.

H. E. and S. S. wish to open a matrimonial correspondence with two gentlemen. "H. E." is nineteen years of age, tall, and very fair. "S. S." is seventeen years of age, has black hair and eyes, and is of middle height. Both are domesticated and good-looking.

M. H. and M. G. wish to open a matrimonial correspondence with two young gentlemen. "M. H." is nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, fair, and pretty. "M. G." is seventeen years of age, has brown eyes and hair, fair complexion, and is considered good-looking.

F. S. C.—Certainly the Empress Eugénie would not reign as Empress of the French should the Emperor die; because no female, by the Salic law, can reign in France. This law in France is admitted to be a departure from a general rule. But our English annals afford a curious anomaly on the sub-

ject; for while the principle of female succession has never been denied, it has so happened in fact that from the Conquest to the reign of Mary I. (nearly five hundred years) there is not a single instance in which the female heir was not forcibly deprived of her legal rights, and generally by the next heir male.

P. F. G.—The following is recommended as a cure for, and preventative of, baldness: Eau-de-Cologne, two ounces; tincture of cantharides, two drachms; oil of rosemary, oil of lavender, and oil of nutmeg, of each ten drops. Mix well, and rub on bald part of head every night.

J. G., who is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, having dark blue eyes, brown hair, considered good-looking, and with an income of £250 a year, would be glad to receive a matrimonial introduction to a lady about eighteen or twenty years of age, who is in possession of a small fortune.

A. F. P.—Squinting (or *strabismus*) is susceptible of cure. It arises from the unequal strength of the eyes, the weaker eye turning away from the object, to avoid the fatigue of exertion. Covering the stronger eye, and thereby compelling the weaker one to more active use, is in general a good means of effecting a cure.

LEONARD, nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, with dark brown hair and eyes, and in the employ of a first class firm in the City, would like to correspond matrimonially with a young lady, from sixteen to eighteen years of age, who must have had a plain education, and be domesticated; accomplishments not sought for.

D. D., in a note to the subjoined lines, says:—"It will be observed that each line of the first stanza ends with the letter t, the second with e—r. The remaining stanzas commence with a, m, o—AMO, the whole forming 'I love thee.' I suppose it is acrostic and anæsthetic."

THE AMO.

Cupid, if god of Love thou art,
Bind Love's own charms around my heart,
And all its harmonies impart.

Within my breast;
Then every chord afloat will start
In words express'd.

Which I will tell unto my love,
The passions in my breast that move;
In songs of it may I improve,
And never tire;

To better blessings from above
Our hearts aspire.

All other things shall then obey,
And gently yield to wisdom's way,
Above, beneath, around our way,
And with concert.

"And let us pray that come it may"—
A sweet reward.

May all I write, in rhyme or prose,
My love, to you be as the rose;
Many a line will I compose—
More if I live.

May every flower in field that grows
Much joy us give.

Of all the joys this earth possesses,
Of all its pleasures, more or less,
One of them—love—without it, bliss
Omitted is.

Oh! that our hearts did each possess
Of what it gives.

D. D.

S. L. H., who is twenty-one years of age, of fair complexion, with light auburn hair, blue eyes, and 5 ft. 2 in. in height; and M. D. F., who is nineteen years of age, tall, with dark eyes and black hair (both of whom are good-looking and domesticated) would be glad to commence a matrimonial correspondence with two gentlemen.

FLORA and ANNIE, who are sisters, respectively eighteen and twenty-two years of age, both being brunettes, *petite*, and of most respectable family, but secluded from society, desire to open a matrimonial correspondence with two gentlemen, who must be fair, in a good position, and have sufficient income to maintain a wife in comfort.

JES-Y.—Artificial manners, and manners that spring from good taste and refinement, can never be mistaken; they differ as widely as gold does from tin. Genuine manners arise from the mind, and those which are based on certain rules of etiquette are only a copy—and an awkward copy at best.

HARRY CORROX, a gentleman by birth and education, a Cambridge man, a good linguist, and a member of one of the Inns of Court, in manners and taste elegant and refined, and possessed of a moderate competency, with good expectations, in person tall, dark, graceful, and good-looking, would be happy to receive a matrimonial introduction to a lady of an amiable and cheerful disposition, musical, and having some means of her own.

WILLIS is a bachelor very anxious to become a Benedict. Is in possession of an income, from property and trade, of about £250 per annum; is about 5 ft. 9 in. in height, tolerably good-looking, and thirty years of age. The lady should be able to play on the piano and sing; but more indispensable qualifications are, that she should be neat, good tempered, acquainted with house-keeping duties, intelligent, well educated, good-looking, (though not necessarily a beauty), and a brunette or dark blonde preferred.

ELLEN B., who is twenty-two years of age, of fair complexion, and rather tall, not endowed with much money or beauty, but is good tempered and domesticated, would like to open a matrimonial correspondence with a gentleman of York, or neighbourhood. "Ellen B." it must be added, alleges that the young gentlemen of the cathedral city prefer "fast" young ladies to those who are not so; a heavy indictment, doubtless, but one which might, "more's the pity," be brought against the bachelorhood of more places than York.

ROSE, F. F. and LILY wish to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with three gentlemen holding a respectable position in society. "Rose" is 5 ft. in height, has black hair and eyes, with a complexion beautifully fair, of a most amiable disposition, twenty years of age, and will receive a few hundreds on her wedding-day. "Florence" and "Lily" are sisters, the former dark, the latter fair as her name. "Florence" has very dark hair, blue eyes, is 5 ft. 5 in. in

height, and passionately fond of music. "Lily" is also 5 ft. 5 in. in height, has blue eyes, with a profusion of golden ringlets, a brilliant complexion, and is admirably good-looking. "Lily" is eighteen years of age, "Florence" twenty-one, and both possess life annuities.

A. G. Y.—"Lent" is commonly said to be derived from a Saxon word for Spring. It was originally called Quaresima, and only lasted forty hours, from twelve o'clock on Good Friday to Easter morn; but was gradually extended to forty days after the fasts of Moses, &c. (See also reply to "R. S. M.")

T. F. A.—No case of spontaneous combustion has ever been clearly authenticated. Of the numerous cases adduced, the evidence has been either insufficient, or it has been proved that the victims were inebriated, and that generally a candle or lamp was in the room and found turned over after the alleged combustion. Indeed, spontaneous combustion is absolutely impossible, the human frame containing 75 or 80 per cent of water; hence the reasons assigned for such a phenomenon are untenable, even though the tissues were completely saturated with alcohol.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—

LILY and VIOLET will be happy to correspond matrimonially, and exchange *cartes* with "Victor" and "Noble." H. M. is prepared to offer "Lizzie" the fullest further particulars, time and opportunity serving.

H. W. desires to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Lizzie G." with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-six years of age, of dark complexion, and kind disposition.

SKELIN, who is twenty years of age, of middle height, having dark hair and blue eyes, would be happy to exchange *cartes* with "Pioneer," with a view to matrimony. EDWARD B. would be glad to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with "Virginia." Is thirty-seven years of age of dark complexion, and has a moderate income.

ROBERT, a dramatic author, is anxious to correspond with "L. K." with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-one years of age, tall, of gentlemanly figure, has a good home, and large expectations; but only a moderate income at present. OPHELIA, who is seventeen years of age, with dark hair and eyes, of cheerful disposition, musical, and very domesticated, would be glad to correspond with "Willis Linton," with a view to matrimony.

ALFRED would like to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "W. H. P." with a matrimonial view. Is twenty-six years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, and is considered very amiable and ladylike.

ANNIE, who is twenty years of age, of medium height, with dark brown hair, and gray eyes, would very much like to correspond matrimonially with "W. W.," whose *carte de visite* is requested.

A. M. T., who is eighteen years of age, rather tall, with dark brown eyes and hair, wishes to correspond matrimonially with "W. W.," whose home "A. M. T." would sedulously endeavour to render happy.

A. H. would be glad to correspond matrimonially with "O. F. P." Is rather fair, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, considered good-looking; and will possess considerable property when of age.

A. J., for the further information of "Lilian," states that he is of medium height, has chestnut hair and dark eyes, is in easy circumstances, educated, of refined taste, well connected, and of high moral character.

J. A. offers himself to the acceptance of "A. S." (whose *carte* is requested). Is twenty years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, very good-looking, well educated, fond of music, and will shortly be in receipt of a moderate income.

MISY would be pleased to correspond matrimonially with a son of Neptune. Is fair, rather *petite*, twenty-one years of age, and very fond of home, which she would endeavour to make happy and attractive.

ADA PEMOY is desirous of corresponding matrimonially with "Rob Roy." Is a brunette, *petite* and graceful, with dark brown hair and hazel eyes, very lively in disposition, and thoroughly domesticated.

JESSIE and LILLY, who are cousins, aged respectively nineteen and twenty years, fair complexion, and generally considered pretty, of middle height, and of respectable parents, would like to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes* with the brothers "K." and "M."

FORGET-ME-NOT will be glad to correspond with "W. H. P." Is twenty-three years of age, of dark complexion, and 5 ft. 3 in. in height. "Forget-me-not" does not by claim to beauty; but would undertake to render a home "just what a home should be."

BESSIE, who is twenty-four years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, has dark curly hair, pleasant in features and in disposition, highly respectable, and thoroughly domesticated, would not object to correspond matrimonially with "Rob Roy" or "E. F.," and is willing to exchange *cartes de visite* with either.

STAR OF THE WEST would like to correspond with "Vigilant," with a view to matrimony. Is seventeen years of age, and has dark hair and eyes, possesses at present a small income; but will, on her marriage, receive a dowry of three thousand pounds, and has, besides, good expectations at the death of an uncle. *Carte de visite* to be exchanged.

RAEFER FITZROY only requires, *selon lui*, a wife possessing the attractions of "R." to whom he offers himself, in order to become the happiest of men. "R. F." is dark, with black eyes, hair, and moustache, and moves in good society, was educated at Oxford, is a member of the bar, and has an adequate income. In personal appearance is generally considered to pass muster among good-looking men, and is in taste and manners elegant and manly.

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BRADEN'S HOUSEHOLD TEA, 3s. Pleasant flavour, abundant strength; 6lb. case, 18s., carriage free to all England.—**ALEXANDER BRADEN**, 15, High Street, Islington, London.

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THE LONDON LOOKING-GLASS COMPANY'S FIVE-GUINEA LOOKING-GLASS. Several new designs now ready.—**A. JENKINS and CO.**, 167, Fleet Street, and 1, New Road, Brighton. New Design Book free, post-paid.

ALSOPP'S PALE ALE.—The **OCTOBER BREWINGS** of the above ALE are now being supplied, in the finest condition, in bottles and in casks, by **FINDLATER, MACKIE, TODD, and CO.**, at their New London Bridge Stores, London Bridge, S.E.

EVANS'S PRIZE KITCHENER.—This Matchless Kitchen obtained a prize at the Exhibition of 1862. It is adapted for the cottage or mansion, from 24 lbs. to £30. Also larger sizes for hotels, taverns, private and public schools, and hospitals, with steam apparatus, from £50 to £100 and upwards. Show-rooms, 33 and 34, King William Street, London Bridge. Manufactory, 10, Arthur Street West, adjoining.

ARROWROOT.—Finest St. Vincent 7lb. Tins, 5s.; 14lb. tins, 9s. 6d.; and 21lb. tins, 13s. 8d. each. One ounce sample sent post free on receipt of two stamps.—**FORSTER and SON**, Tea and Arrowroot Merchants, Philpot Lane.

GREY HAIR.—248, High Holborn, London.—**ALEX. ROSS'S** charges for dyeing the hair—Ladies, from 7s. 6d.; gentlemen, from 5s. The dye is sold at 3s. 6d., and sent by post for 54 stamps. Any shade produced.

SPANISH FLY is the acting ingredient in **ALEX. ROSS'S CANTHARIDES OIL**, which produces whitening and thickens hair. Sold at 3s. 6d., 5s. 6d., and 10s. 6d.; or per post, 54, 84, or 144 stamps.—**A. ROSS**, 248, High Holborn.

ALEX. ROSS'S DESTROYER OF HAIR removes superfluous hair from the face without the slightest effect to the skin, 3s. 6d., or per post for 54 stamps. **ROSS'S TOILET MAGAZINE**, 1d. monthly; had of all booksellers; or for two stamps.—248, High Holborn, London.

FELIX SULTANA'S GOLDEN CASSETTE, which unceasingly emits a delightful fragrance, 1s. The Fairy Fountain, six different perfumes, in boxes, 1s. Queen Dagmar's Cross, a jewel for a lady's neck, delicately perfumed, 5s. 6d. A bottle of Jockey Club, Wood Violet, and Kiss Me Quick, in case, 4s. 6d. Genuine Otto of Roses, in original bottles, 3s. 6d. All sent free.—**FELIX SULTANA**, Royal perfumer, 23, Finsbury, City, and 210, Regent Street, London.

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COLMAN'S PRIZE MEDAL MUSTARD bears their trade mark, the Bull's Head, on each package. It is the only mustard which obtained a Prize Medal at the Great Exhibition, 1862; their "genuine" and "double superfine" are the qualities particularly recommended for family use. Retail in every town throughout the United Kingdom.—**J. and J. COLMAN**, 26, Cannon Street, London.

CAUTION.—**COCKS'S** celebrated **READING SAUCE**, for Fish, Game, Steaks, Soups, Gravies, Hot and Cold Meats, unrivalled for general use, sold by all respectable Dealers in Sauces. Is manufactured only by the Executors of the Sole Proprietor, Charles Cocks, 6, Duke Street, Reading, the Original Sauce Warehouse. All others are spurious imitations.

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One whole Year's Banking for Profits over all later entrants will be secured by Assuring before 5th April.

THOS. FRASER, Resident Secretary.
London (Chief Office), 20, King William Street, City; (West End Office), 48, Pall Mall, S.W.

CLERICAL, MEDICAL, and GENERAL LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY, 13, St. James's Square, London, S.W.—Established 1824.

FINANCIAL RESULTS OF THE SOCIETY'S OPERATIONS.

The annual income exceeds £291,000
The Assurance Fund safely invested, is over 1,446,000
The New Policies in the last year were 466, assuring 271,440
The Bonus added to Policies at the last division was 275,077
The total claims by death paid amount to 1,962,629
The following are among the distinctive features of the society:

Credit System.—On any policy for the whole of life, where the age does not exceed 60, one-half of the annual premiums during the first five years may remain on credit, and may either continue as a debt on the policy, or be paid off at any time.

Low Rates of Premium for Young Lives, with early participation in profits.

Endowment Assurances may be effected, without profits, by which the sum assured becomes payable on the attainment of a specified age, or at death, whichever event shall first happen.

Invalid Lives may be assured at rates proportioned to the increased risk.

Prompt Settlement of Claims.—Claims paid thirty days after proof of death.

The Reversionary Bonus at the Quinquennial Division in 1862 averaged 48 per cent., and the Cash Bonus 28 per cent. on the premiums paid in the five years.

The next Division of Profits will take place in January, 1867, and persons who effect new policies before the end of June next will be entitled at that division to one year's additional share of profits over later entrants.

Tables of rates and forms of proposal can be obtained of any of the Society's agents, or of

GEORGE CUTCLIFFE, Actuary and Secretary.
13, St. James's Square, London, S.W.

THE LAND SECURITIES COMPANY (Limited).

The Company ISSUE MORTGAGE DEBENTURES, bearing 4½ per cent. interest, payable half-yearly, at the Bankers of the Company in London, or at such Country Bankers as may be arranged with the holders, payable at such periods and for such amounts as may suit investors. The aggregate amount of the debentures at any time issued is strictly limited to the total amount of the moneys for the time being, secured to the Company by carefully selected mortgages, of which a register is kept at the Company's Chief Office, open to inspection by debenture-holders. The holders have, moreover, the security of the large uncalculated capital of the Company, which amounts at present to £900,000. These debentures, therefore, combining the advantages of a good mortgage with ready convertibility, will be found a perfectly safe and convenient investment.

The Company accept money on deposit in the smallest or largest sums, at interest, in anticipation of investment in the mortgage debentures, and they undertake the negotiation of special investments, to suit exceptional circumstances.

Apply to the Managing Director, Land Securities Company, No. 32, Charing Cross, S.W.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

D. H.—The lines are declined with thanks.

FELIX F.—We regret that we cannot avail ourselves of the poem.

JANET.—The lines on the "Four Seasons" are declined with thanks. (See also reply to "R. F.")

WILLIAM E. W.—The lines are considerably below our standard, and are declined with thanks.

M. E. M. O.—We cannot reply to correspondents using the indefinite signatures of "Constant Reader," or "Constant Subscriber."

J. L. K.—Members of Parliament are only privileged from arrest during the session of Parliament, and for forty days before and after it.

Z. Z.—A business man, forty-eight years of age, would like to meet with a lady not under thirty, with a view to matrimony. The lady must not object to superintending a business.

J. V. D.—Who is twenty-one years of age, with dark hair and eyes, with good prospects, would like to correspond with a young lady of about the same age, with a view to matrimony.

J. O.—A widower, forty years of age, 5 feet 8 in. in height, fair, and good tempered, would be glad to again enter the estate of matrimony; a lady between thirty and forty years of age preferred, and if a widow, *tant mieux*.

C. R.—The numbers of the 7 DAYS JOURNAL may be procured separately. Covers for binding THE LONDON READER can be obtained at the office, or by order through any bookseller.

R. B.—You must bring a suit for nullity of marriage in the Divorce Court. If you marry without doing so, notwithstanding your wife's desertion, such marriage would be illegal and void.

J. L. G.—A positive cure for corns is an application of the strongest acetic acid. A camel's hair brush must be applied, and in a few days the corn, whether hard or soft, will disappear.

WILLIAM S.—would be happy to correspond with a young lady, who must be a singer and fond of music, with a view to matrimony. He is tall, has dark eyes, brown hair, whiskers and moustaches, and is in trade.

ERENA.—Yes; reading much by artificial light is injurious to the eyesight. In reading, place the light behind you, so that the rays may pass over your shoulder to the book, which will relieve the eyes.

X. Y. Z.—*Papier-mâché* articles should be washed with cold water and a sponge (without soap), and while damp, sprinkled with flour, and then polished with a flannel. (The handwriting is not good.)

B. F.—You can make a lotion for the removal of freckles thus:—Muriate of ammonia, half a drachm; lavender water, two drachms; distilled water, half a pint. The lotion should be applied with a sponge two or three times daily.

E. S. M.—Shrove Tuesday was so called because in Roman times it was usual to confess on that day, which act was expressed by the Saxon word *shrove* or *shrove*. It was formerly a day of extraordinary sport and feasting, an apprentices' holiday, &c.

C. T.—Actions of debt, or any lending without a special contract, must be brought within six years; actions of debt or covenant upon deeds may be brought within twenty years. You should apply to the registrar of the county court, whence the judgment summons issued.

1865.—Only persons who are candidates for employment under Government are required to pass an official examination. Railway companies being under private management, you must apply to the general manager of the particular line on which you wish to be engaged.

H. W.—A good preparation for effacing writing ink is obtained by mixing two drachms of the solution of muriate of tin with four drachms of water. It should be applied with a camel's hair brush. (The handwriting is bold and clear, but rather deficient in symmetrical formation of the letters.)

G. T.—Sorters, letter-carriers, and messengers in the General Post Office are required to pass only a very simple examination—to write their own names and addresses, read the addresses of letters, and add a few figures together. Applications must be made at St. Martin's-le-Grand.

C. J.—Who is twenty-three years of age, and 5 ft. in height, with good prospects, would like a matrimonial introduction to a young lady about twenty years of age, of fair complexion, respectably connected, well educated, and thoroughly domesticated. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged.

H. E. and S. S.—wish to open a matrimonial correspondence with two gentlemen. "H. E." is nineteen years of age, tall, and very fair. "S. S." is seventeen years of age, has black hair and eyes, and is of middle height. Both are domesticated and good-looking.

M. H. and M. C.—wish to open a matrimonial correspondence with two young gentlemen. "M. H." is nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, fair, and pretty; "M. C." is seventeen years of age, has brown eyes and hair, fair complexion, and is considered good-looking.

F. S. C.—Certainly the Empress Eugénie would not reign as Empress of the French should the Emperor die; because no female, by the Salic law, can reign in France. This law in France is admitted to be a departure from a general rule. But our English annals afford a serious anomaly in the sub-

ject; for while the principle of female succession has never been denied, it has so happened in fact that from the Conquest to the reign of Mary I. (nearly five hundred years) there is not a single instance in which the female heir was not forcibly deprived of her legal rights, and generally by the next heir male.

P. F. G.—The following is recommended as a cure for, and preventative of, baldness:—Eau-de-Cologne, two ounces; tincture of cantharides, two drachms; oil of rosemary, oil of lavender, and oil of nutmeg, of each ten drops. Mix well, and rub on bald part of head every night.

J. G., who is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, having dark blue eyes, brown hair, considered good-looking, and with an income of £250 a year, would be glad to receive a matrimonial introduction to a lady about eighteen or twenty years of age, who is in possession of a small fortune.

A. F. P.—Squinting (or *strabismus*) is susceptible of cure. It arises from the unequal strength of the eyes, the weaker eye turning away from the object to avoid the fatigue of exertion. Covering the stronger eye, and thereby compelling the weaker one to more active use, is in general a good means of effecting a cure.

LEONATUS, nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, with dark brown hair and eyes, and in the employ of a first class firm in the City, would like to correspond matrimonially with a young lady, from sixteen to eighteen years of age, who must have had a plain education, and be domesticated; accomplishments not sought for.

D. D., in a note to the subjoined lines, says:—"It will be observed that each line of the first stanza ends with the letter *t*, the second with *e*-s. The remaining stanzas commence with *a*, *m*, *o*-*amo*, the whole forming 'I love thee.' I suppose it is acrostic and anacrostic."

TE AMO.

Cupid, if god of Love thou art,
Blind Love's own charms around my heart,
And all its harmonies impart.

Within my breast;
Then every chord afresh will start
In words express'd.

Which I will tell unto my love,
The passions in my breast that move;
In songs of it may I improve,

And never tire;
To better blessings from above
Our hearts aspire.

All other things shall then obey,
And gently yield to wisdom's sway,
Above, beneath, around our way,
All with consent.

"And let us pray that come it may"—
A sweet reward.

May all I write, in rhyme or prose,
My love, to you be the rose;
Many a line will I compose—

More if I live,
May every flower in field that grows
Much joy you give.

Of all the joys this earth possesses,
Of all its pleasures, more or less,
One of them—love—without it, bliss
Omitted is.

Oh! that our hearts did each possess
Of what I give.

D. D.

S. L. H., who is twenty-one years of age, of fair complexion, with light auburn hair, blue eyes, and 5 ft. 2 in. in height; and M. D. F., who is nineteen years of age, tall, with dark eyes and black hair (both of whom are good-looking and domesticated) would be glad to commence a matrimonial correspondence with two gentlemen.

FLORA and ANNIE, who are sisters, respectively eighteen and twenty-two years of age, both being brunettes, *petite*, and of most respectable family, but secluded from society, desire to open a matrimonial correspondence with two gentlemen, who must be fair, in a good position, and have sufficient income to maintain a wife in comfort.

JES-Y.—Artificial manners, and manners that spring from good taste and refinement, can never be mistaken; they differ as widely as gold does from tinsel. Genuine manners arise from the mind; and those which are based on certain rules of etiquette are only a copy—and an awkward copy at best.

HARRY CORREY, a gentleman by birth and education, a Cambridge man, a good linguist, and a member of one of the Inns of Court, in manners and taste elegant and refined, and possessed of a moderate competency, with good expectations, in person tall, dark, graceful, and good-looking, would be happy to receive a matrimonial introduction to a lady of an amiable and cheerful disposition, musical, and having some means of her own.

WILLIE is a bachelor very anxious to become a Benedict. Is in possession of an income, from property and trade, of about £250 per annum; is about 5 ft. 9 in. in height, tolerably good-looking, and thirty years of age. The lady would be able to play on the piano and sing; but more indispensable qualifications are, that she should be neat, good tempered, acquainted with house-keeping duties, intelligent, well educated, good-looking, (though not necessarily a beauty), and a brunette or dark blonde preferred.

ELLEN R., who is twenty-two years of age, of fair complexion, and rather tall, not endowed with much money or beauty, but is good tempered and domesticated, would like to open a matrimonial correspondence with a gentleman of York, or neighbourhood. "Ellen R." it must be added, alleges that the young gentlemen of the cathedral city prefer "fast" young ladies to those who are not so; a heavy indictment, doubtless, but one which might, "more's the pity," be brought against the bachelorhood of more places than York.

ROSE, FLORENCE, and LILY wish to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with three gentlemen holding a respectable position in society. "Rose" is 5 ft. in height, has black hair and eyes, with a complexion beautifully fair, of a most amiable disposition, twenty years of age, and will receive a few hundreds on her wedding-day. "Florence" and "Lily" are sisters, the former dark, the latter fair as her name. "Florence" has very dark hair, blue eyes, and 5 ft. 5 in. in

height, and passionately fond of music. "Lily" is also 5 ft. 5 in. in height, has blue eyes, with a profusion of golden ringlets, a brilliant complexion, and is admittedly good-looking. "Lily" is eighteen years of age, "Florence" twenty-one, and both possess life annuities.

A. G. Y.—"Lent" is commonly said to be derived from a Saxon word for Spring. It was originally called *Quintagesima*, and only lasted forty hours, from twelve o'clock on Good Friday to Easter morn; but was gradually extended to forty days after the fasts of Moses, &c. (See also reply to "E. S. M.")

T. F. A.—No case of spontaneous combustion has ever been clearly authenticated. Of the numerous cases adduced, the evidence has been either insufficient, or it has been proved that the victims were insobriety, and that generally a candle or lamp was in the room and found turned over after the alleged combustion. Indeed, spontaneous combustion is absolutely impossible, the human frame containing 75 or 80 per cent. of water; hence the reasons assigned for such a phenomenon are untenable, even though the tissues were completely saturated with alcohol.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED—

LILY and VIOLET will be happy to correspond matrimonially, and exchange *cartes* with "Victor" and "Noble."

H. M. is prepared to offer "Lizzie" the fullest further particulars, time and opportunity serving.

H. W. desires to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Lizzie G.," with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-six years of age, of dark complexion, and kind disposition.

SELINA, who is twenty years of age, of middle height, having dark hair and blue eyes, would be happy to exchange *cartes* with "Pioneer," with a view to matrimony.

EDWARD B. would be glad to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with "Virginia." Is thirty-seven years of age, of dark complexion, and has a moderate income.

ROBERT, a dramatic author, is anxious to correspond with "L. B.," with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-one years of age, tall, of gentlemanly figure, has a good home, and large expectations, but only a moderate income at present.

ORISLITA, who is seventeen years of age, with dark hair and eyes, of cheerful disposition, musical, and very domesticated, would be glad to correspond with "Willis Linton," with a view to matrimony.

ALETHE would like to correspond and exchange *cartes de visite* with "W. H. P.," with a matrimonial view. Is twenty-six years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, and is considered very amiable and ladylike.

ANNIE, who is twenty years of age, of medium height, with dark brown hair, and gray eyes, would very much like to correspond matrimonially with "W. W.," whose *carte de visite* is requested.

A. M. T., who is eighteen years of age, rather tall, with dark brown eyes and hair, wishes to correspond matrimonially with "W. W.," whose home "A. M. T." would sedulously endeavour to render happy.

A. H. would be glad to correspond matrimonially with "O. F. P." Is rather fair, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, considered good-looking; and will possess considerable property when of age.

A. G., for the further information of "Lillian," states that he is of medium height, has chestnut hair and dark eyes, is in easy circumstances, educated, of refined taste, well connected, and of high moral character.

J. A. offers himself to the acceptance of "A. S." (whose *carte* is requested.) Is twenty years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, very good-looking, well educated, fond of music, and will shortly be in receipt of a moderate income.

MIMY would be pleased to correspond matrimonially with a son of Neptune. Is fair, rather *petite*, twenty-one years of age, and very fond of home, which she would endeavour to make happy and attractive.

ADA PERCY is desirous of corresponding matrimonially with "Rob Roy." Is a brunette, *petite* and graceful, with dark brown hair and hazel eyes, very lively in disposition, and thoroughly domesticated.

JESSIE and LILLY, who are cousins, aged respectively nineteen and twenty years, fair complexion, and generally considered pretty, of middle height, and of respectable parents, would like to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes* with the brothers "R. C." and "M."

FORGET-ME-NOT will be glad to correspond with "W. H. P." Is twenty-three years of age, of dark complexion, and 5 ft. 3 in. in height. "Forget-me-not" does not lay claim to beauty; but would undertake to render a home "just what a home should be."

BESSIE, who is twenty-four years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, has dark curly hair, pleasant in features and in disposition, highly respectable, and thoroughly domesticated, would not object to correspond matrimonially with "Rob Roy" or "E. F.," and is willing to exchange *cartes de visite* with either.

STAR OF THE WEST would like to correspond with "Vigilant," with a view to matrimony. Is seventeen years of age, has dark hair and eyes, possesses at present a small income; but will, on her marriage, receive a dowry of three thousand pounds, and has, besides, good expectations at the death of an uncle. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged.

RALPH FITZROY only requires, *selon lui*, a wife possessing the attractions of "L. R.," to whom he offers himself, in order to become the happiest of mortals. "R. F." is dark, with black eyes, hair, and moustache, and moves in good society, was educated at Oxford, is a member of the bar, and has an adequate income. In personal appearance is generally considered to pass muster among good-looking men, and is in taste and manners elegant and manly.

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BRADEN'S HOUSEHOLD TEA, 3s. Pleasant flavour, abundant strength; 6lb. case, 18s., cartage free to all England.—**ALEXANDER BRADEN**, 18, High Street, Islington, London.

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THE LONDON LOOKING-GLASS COMPANY'S FIVE GUINEA LOOKING-GLASS. Several new designs now ready.—**A. JENKINS and CO.**, 167, Fleet Street, and 1, New Road, Brighton. New Design Book free, post-paid.

ALLSOPP'S PALE ALE.—The **OCTOBER BREWINGS** of the above ALE are now being supplied, in the finest condition, in bottles and in casks, by **FINDLATER, MACKIE, TODD, and CO.**, at their New London Bridge Stores, London Bridge, S.E.

EVANS'S PRIZE KITCHENER.—This Matchless Kitchen obtained a prize at the Exhibition of 1862. It is adapted for the cottage or mansion, from £15s. to £30. Also larger sizes for hotels, taverns, private and public schools, and hospitals, with steam apparatus, from £50 to £100 and upwards. Show-rooms, 33 and 34, King William Street, London Bridge. Manufactory, 10, Arthur Street West, adjoining.

ARROWROOT.—Finest St. Vincent 7lb. Tins, 5s.; 14lb. tins, 9s. 6d.; and 21lb. tins, 13s. 8d. each. One ounce sample sent post free on receipt of two stamps.—**FORSTER and SON**, Tea and Arrowroot Merchants, Philpot Lane.

GREY HAIR.—248, High Holborn, London.—**ALEX. ROSS'S** charges for dyeing the hair—Ladies, from 7s. 6d.; gentlemen's, from 5s. The dye is sold at 3s. 6d., and sent by post for 54 stamps. Any shade produced.

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ALEX. ROSS'S DESTROYER OF HAIR removes superfluous hair from the face without the slightest effect to the skin, 3s. 6d., or per post for 54 stamps. **ROSS'S TOILET MAGAZINE**, 1d. monthly; had of all booksellers; or for two stamps.—248, High Holborn, London.

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FRY'S HOMEOPATHIC COCOA, in Packets.—The purity, delicacy of flavour, and nutritious properties of this Cocoa, as well as the great facility with which it is made, have rendered it a standard article of general consumption. It is highly approved and strongly recommended by medical men, and is equally adapted for invalids and general consumers.—**J. S. FRY and SONS**, Bristol and London, are the only English Manufacturers of Cocoa who obtained the Prize Medal, 1862.

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POWNCBEY'S FRENCH BRANDY, at 4s. 6d. per bottle, is confidently recommended. Dr. Hassall's report: "The French brandies sold by Mr. Pownceby are a pure grape spirit, and valuable for medicinal purposes."—**S. POWNCBEY**, 19, Ernest Street, Albany Street, N.W. Samples forwarded.

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WATCHES and CLOCKS.—**FREDC. HAWLEY** (Successor to Thomas Hawley), many years Watchmaker, by special appointment, to his late Majesty George IV., invites inspection of his carefully-finished Stock, at 148, Regent Street, W. Elegant Gold watches, £2 15s. to £35; Silver Watches, £1 5s. to £12 12s. Eight-day Timepieces, 12s. 6d. Clocks, striking hours and half-hours, £2 15s. and upwards.—**FREDERIC HAWLEY**, Watchmaker, 148, Regent Street, W. (from the Strand and Coventry Street). Established nearly a century. Merchants and Shippers supplied.

BRANDY.—The Best and Cheapest in the World. Cognac, 15s. per gallon; one dozen, 33s. Champagne, 18s. per gallon; one dozen, 39s. This splendid Brandy cannot be equalled. Best London Gin, full strength, 13s. per gallon; one dozen, 29s. The above prices per dozen include railway carriage.—**G. PHILLIPS and CO.**, Distillers, Holborn Hill, London.

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NINETY THOUSAND POUNDS.

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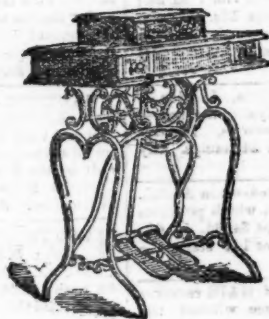
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